A Golden Treasury of Medieval Literature

James J. Walsh

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A golden treasury of medieval literature

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A GOLDEN TREASURY
of
MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Medieval Scriptorium

A GOLDEN TREASURY OF MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

By JAMES J. WALSH
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Dedicated

TO

THE TEACHING SISTERS IN THIS COUNTRY
WHO HAVE DONE AND ARE DOING
SO MUCH FOR EDUCATION
OF MIND AND HEART

33033

Preface

DURING the thousand years from the fifth to the fifteenth century men made supremely great architecture, sculpture and painting in Europe and it would be quite impossible to believe that they had not also made great literature. Their achievements have come to be properly appreciated only during the past generation. The literary work of the Middle Ages is, on the average, a millennium away from us, and yet much of it is as interesting for our day as the artistic products of the period.

This volume is an effort to present selections from the greatest writers of the Middle Ages so as to give students the opportunity for actual intimate contact with what was written by men whose work, having lasted for a thousand years, is not likely to fail of interest at any time so long as this stage of our civilization lasts. There is a special satisfaction in that consideration now that so much of our literature is ephemeral to the last degree.

English medieval literature is passed over lightly in this book because it can be readily secured from other sources. From Cædmon to Chaucer there is some wonderful literature well deserving of study but there is no room for it here. For a similar reason "The Divine Comedy" is omitted though several of Dante's sonnets are cited. To afford a proper appreciation of Dante's great epic and its comparative value in literature demands more space than can be afforded in a text-book of this

kind. Boccaccio and Petrarch and some others are omitted because they belong in spirit to the period beyond the Middle Ages.

The selections chosen have as a rule been those which were felt to represent the feelings of the vast majority of the people of the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, only too often it has been the custom to present the writings of erratic geniuses as representative of the spirit of the time. Medieval literature, like medieval architecture, sculpture and painting, accomplished its best work in the service of the Church. That fact is amply demonstrated in this collection of selections from medieval literary masters.

The greatest difficulty in compiling this book has been to keep it within the bounds of a handy volume for students. The range of medieval literature is so large and so varied that it is hard to keep from quoting more and more of the literary gems that adorn the period. The book might readily be extended to a series of volumes. What is provided here is only a glimpse at what is best in the hope that this may allure to further study.

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Introduction

MEDIEVAL literature represents a large section of human thought far richer and more varied than was assumed until assiduous research in the last few generations revealed the literary wealth of the time. It was to be expected that the generations which left such magnificent monuments of architecture, unsurpassed in beauty and grandeur ever since, which, with all our building facilities in the modern time we have failed to rival successfully, must surely have produced great and enduring literature. This assurance becomes all the stronger when it is recalled that the later Middle Ages particularly created sculpture that has never been excelled. One need only mention the Pisanis, the Della Robbias and Ghiberti to prove this, but the Middle Ages also did painting that continues down to our own day to be a stimulus and a model for artistic works ever since. Such men as Giotto, Cimabue and Duccio are never out of date. Our greatest painter in the modern time, François Millet of "The Angelus," and of so many other surpassing paintings, declared that the painters with whom he was brought in contact in Paris, the distinguished teachers of the current generation in art, helped him but little in his artistic development. The only stimulus that came to him was from a study of the primitives, that is the painters of the medieval period.

It would be almost impossible to believe that these medieval generations which thus gave birth to supremely

great architecture, sculpture and painting, had not produced also great literature. Until quite recently medieval literature was in eclipse, as a result of the condition under which it was produced. Most of the literature of the Middle Ages was written in Latin for that was the universal language of scholars. The men of that time wasted no time or labor over the invention of a universal language for they already had one in Latin which they used so freely. Unfortunately modern generations lost their familiarity with Latin to a great extent and so it became difficult for them to appreciate medieval literature properly. Gradually scholars in the various countries have been putting the literature of the Middle Ages before us once more during the past hundred years, until now a large body of medieval literature is available for students either in the original Latin or in the vernacular of various translations or modern editions of the vernacular languages.

There still remains, however, an immense amount of medieval literature that exists only in manuscript and it will be several generations at least before these manuscripts will have been studied, and deciphered, and edited so as to make them available for the ordinary student who is seeking culture for himself, and above all, knowledge, of the civilization that existed and produced such marvelous achievements in the arts and literature during that thousand years from the end of the fifth to the end of the fifteenth century. This has been called the Middle Ages and the very term has carried something of a stigma with it. Unfortunately, for several centuries, mainly as the result of religious prejudice, the period

was characterized as the "dark ages." As John Fiske said in the introduction to his work, "The Beginnings of New England or the Puritan Theocracy in Its Relation to Civil and Religious Liberty":

"When we think of all the work big with promise of the future that went on in those centuries which *modern writers in their ignorance* (italics ours) used once to set apart and stigmatize as the 'dark ages'; when we consider how the seeds of what is noblest in modern life were then painfully sown upon the soil which Imperial Rome had prepared; when we think of the various work of a Gregory, a Benedict, a Boniface, an Alfred, a Charlemagne, we feel that there is a sense in which the most brilliant achievements of pagan antiquity are dwarfed in comparison with these."

Fiske realized very clearly just what had happened in Europe and to whom the rescue of it from the barbarism which came down over it as a consequence of the invasion of the Teutonic tribes from the north was due. He said: "While wave after wave of Germanic colonization poured over Romanized Europe breaking down old boundary lines and working sudden and astonishing changes on the map, setting up in every quarter baronies, dukedoms and kingdoms fermenting with vigorous political life; while for twenty generations this salutary but wild and dangerous work was going on, there was never a moment when the imperial sway of Rome was quite set aside and forgotten, there was never a time when union of some sort was not maintained through the dominion which the Church had established over the European mind. When we duly consider this great fact in its relation to what

went before and what came after, it is hard to find words to express the debt of gratitude which modern civilization owes to the Roman Catholic Church."

These are indeed surprising words to find in the introduction to a volume on "The Puritan Theocracy in its Relation to Civil and Religious Liberty" and yet even these expressions are not so strong as some of those which Fiske employed in preceding paragraphs. Few men have known their Middle Ages better than John Fiske and fewer still knew them on a background of the broadest knowledge of modern history and at the same time with a scientific training such as Fiske possessed. He did not hesitate, however, to state very emphatically his appreciation of the value of all that had been done by the Church and those most intimately attached to her and above all of the writings of some of these great churchmen. He said: "In that golden age alike of feudal system, empire and of church, there were to be seen the greatest monarchs in fullest sympathy with their peoples that Christendom has ever known—an Edward I, a St. Louis, a Frederick II. Then when in the pontificate of Innocent III and his successors, the Roman Church reached its apogee, the religious yearning of men sought expression in the sublimest architecture the world has ever seen. Then Aquinas summed up in his profound speculations the substance of Catholic theology, and while the morning twilight of modern science might be discerned in the treatises of Roger Bacon, while wandering minstrelsy revealed the treasures of modern speech, soon to be wrought under the hands of Dante and Chaucer into forms of exquisite beauty, the sacred fervor of the apos-

tolic ages found itself renewed in the tender and mystic piety of St. Francis of Assisi."

John Fiske recognized very cordially, however, that it was not alone for the sake of what was then accomplished that these men must be held up for our reverence and admiration today, but it was because they were laying the foundations on which the structure of modern civilization was to rise as a preparation for the modern time. John Fiske says, therefore, of the Middle Ages: "It was a wonderful time, but after all less memorable as the culmination of a medieval empire and medieval church than as the dawning of a new era in which we live today."

That is the spirit in which the study of medieval literature must be approached. The great writers of the older time—and some of them represent geniuses of the highest order in the production of literature, were making straight the path and opening up the ways for modern literature in so far as that represents a real expression of humanity and not merely the utterance of some partial interest of mankind that has no real significance for life in its breadth and fulness.

Many others besides John Fiske, who have devoted themselves to a knowledge of what used to be called the dark ages, have written about them in the same temper as the New England historian. Professor Grandgent, Professor of Romance Languages at Harvard University, in his volume "Old and New," does not hesitate to say that to include the thirteenth century in the period of the dark ages as is suggested in the definition of that period in the Century Dictionary, is to write oneself

down as absurd. "For," he says, "to apply the term 'dark' to the century that saw the greatest scholar (Albertus Magnus), the greatest theologian (Thomas Aquinas) and the greatest poet (Dante) of our Christian era would be too manifestly unfit." He then proceeds to discuss various other phases of the so-called dark ages, and points out how utterly senseless is any such designation of them since so many of the men of that time were deeply interested in the phases of knowledge that we would like to have even educated men occupied with at the present time. He quotes in contrast to the taste of the Middle Ages in art and literature, the words of Frederic Harrison, the distinguished English positivist and writer on many subjects, who said in his essay on "The Cult of the Foul":

"The new craze under which we are now suffering is the Cult of the Foul, or to put it in Greek it may be dubbed Aischrolatreia—worship or admiration of the ugly, the nasty, the brutal. Poetry, Romance, Drama, Painting, Sculpture, Music, Manners, even Dress, are now recast to suit popular taste by adopting forms which hitherto have been regarded as unpleasing, gross or actually loathsome."

Mr. Harrison continues: "To be refined is to be 'goody-goody'; gutter slang is so actual; if a ruffian tramp knifes his pal, it is 'so strong,' and if on the stage his ragged paramour bites off a rival's ear, the half-penny press [the afternoon papers and especially the tabloids] screams with delight. Painters are warned against anything pretty, so they dab on bright tints to look like a linoleum pattern or they go for subjects to a thieves'

kitchen. The one aim in life as in art is to shock one's grandmother."

Professor Grandgent then has suggested that we alter the Century definition of the dark ages to something like this: "The Dark Ages— an epoch in the world's history beginning with or shortly after the French Revolution marked by a general extension of teaching and education, resulting in a vast increase of self-confident ignorance. It was induced by the gradual triumph of democracy, and will last until the masses, now become arbiters of taste and science, shall have been raised to the level formerly occupied by the privileged classes."

There is the hope that the study of the literature as well as the arts of the Middle Ages would be helpful in bringing about that modification of taste which will be necessary before we reach the consummation so devoutly to be wished which Professor Grandgent sets before us. One thing is certain that the literature of the Middle Ages is not ephemeral in character and the study of it will not waste time and mental energy over passing trivialities that are the literary fads of a generation. Literary works which still continue of interest five hundred years and more after they were written, are created from so close to the heart of human nature that they are quite sure always to be of interest and are destined to immortality—at least so far as this stage of human civilization is concerned. That is the reason why this series of selections from medieval writers is presented as a text-book for students in our day. To be brought in actual intimate touch with enduring literature that has satisfied the critical sense of generation after generation down to our

time holds out higher hope of training the critical faculty for the proper recognition and appreciation of great literary work than any amount of information with regard to it. The student must have expert opinion to guide him so this is supplied by a series of quotations that come from men who are recognized as leaders in the literary world.

Lest it should be thought that the selections presented are supposed to represent anything like a complete sample of what was written in the Middle Ages, it may be well to call attention to how many books from this period we have in our hands and how many more are likely to be made available for us during the next few generations. In spite of the difficulty of writing by hand and the time and labor and patience required for the reproduction of books, a very large number of volumes were in circulation during the Middle Ages, far more than is usually thought.

In recent years an immense amount of interest has been aroused in what are called incunabula, that is the cradle books (*incunabulum,* Latin, cradle) of printing. By this is meant the books printed before 1501. The British Museum for several hundred years has made it a practice to secure incunabula whenever offered for sale unless they were held at prices that were absolutely forbidding. As a result it has more than nine thousand different items printed before the end of 1500. This does not represent, however, anything like the number of books actually printed. Hain, who was the first to attempt to make a complete list of incunabula, spent a lifetime at the task and succeeded in listing from actual

observation about sixteen thousand three hundred. He died before the end of his work, leaving the titles that begin with letters at the end of the alphabet imperfect. Hain was followed by Coppinger who listed sixty-six hundred and twenty additional books. This made altogether nearly twenty-three thousand. Then came Reichlin's list which added nearly two thousand more. Altogether twenty-five thousand different items printed before 1501 have been seen and handled. This is known not to be the entire number. With the rapid growth of the list in recent years, it is not surprising that the British Museum in the preface to its catalogue of incunabula says that very probably there were altogether some thirty thousand items printed before 1501.

Most of the books thus printed in the first generation of printing were popular writings many of which had been circulating very commonly in manuscript during the Middle Ages. The first book printed was the Bible and this was followed particularly by books of popular information such as Vincent of Beauvais' "Mirrors," Bartholomew's *De proprietatibus rerum,* and then a great many spiritual books, such as à Kempis and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, because the great majority of those who could read belonged to the clerical orders.

The latter half of the fifteenth century is often said to have witnessed a great awakening of the human mind because of the invention of printing, but it must not be forgotten that the principal books printed, by far the greatest number of works which issued from the printing press, were works that had been written during the Mid-

dle Ages and had attracted wide attention. The scholastic philosophers, particularly, were very well represented among them. Comparatively few of the books printed during this first generation of printing were actually written during the fifteenth century and those that were, were of minor importance and comparatively small volumes as a rule and issued in small editions.

How hungry those who could read were for the books that were being printed can be best appreciated from the number of volumes that were called for. The British Museum estimate of thirty thousand different items issued is probably conservative. Perhaps one-fifth of these were smaller items consisting of a few pages or sometimes of but a single page as a broadside. There must have been nearly twenty-five thousand books comprising over a hundred pages each. Not a few of them were huge folios containing from half a million to well above a million words. The editions issued by the early printers were not large but there were seldom less than a hundred copies printed from the type set up. Sometimes there were five hundred or more copies issued in one edition. If the average number were considered to be about three hundred, that would mean that some eight million separate books were absorbed by the last generation of the fifteenth century in that first generation of printing. It was the medieval mind that brought about the invention of printing. It was a generation trained by the closing generations of the Middle Ages which took up the task of disseminating the great thoughts of the men of the Middle Ages by this new invention which made possible a provi-

sion of reading matter such as the world had never before dreamt of having.

Many more medieval books were printed after 1501 and therefore do not come under the designation of incunabula. The plays of the nun dramatist of the tenth century, for instance, Hroswitha, did not see the light of print until 1501. Several hundred further medieval books appeared each year for the next half century at least and only then the number of them gradually dwindled. The first book printed on this continent is usually said to have been the well known spiritual work, of St. John Climacus, "The Spiritual Ladder" (in the Spanish-American printed edition *La Escala Spiritual* printed in Mexico in 1539). This is the work from which the author's designation Climacus is derived through the Greek word climax which means a ladder. This had been one of the most popular works in the medieval monasteries and convents for both required and voluntary spiritual reading. Many other works might be mentioned but the situation in printing will be readily appreciated by anyone who has given any attention to the origin of the cradle books.

We have come to realize, then, that the thousand years from the fifth to the fifteenth century instead of being shrouded in the darkness sometimes attributed to them were full of light. John Fiske has suggested that these were the bright ages in very truth. There still remains an immense amount of material, philosophic and literary, buried in the manuscripts of old libraries though modern research has now become so extensive that it will not be long before the contents of these manuscripts will be

made available through printing and editing for all those who are interested in the products of a great period.

Time winnowed the mass of writings of that thousand years and left only what was worth while to be printed. The literary product of a millennium of human effort thus compressed for us into a compact selection of what was best in human expression is here offered in such choice morsels as may tempt readers, and above all students, to wander farther into the broad fields of medieval literature for themselves. This may afford the chance for a training in taste that is sadly needed at the present time. What remains of medieval literature is very largely the imperishable residue of great writing. Contact with it, it is hoped, will lift assiduous readers at least out of the slough of despond of hopelessly vicious literature into which so many are slipping in our time. Medieval writers may prove a stimulus and cordial incitement to higher and better things, for what they wrote was written from so close to the heart of human nature that it carries with it its own wonderful power to touch the human heart and arouse what is best in human feelings.

A GOLDEN TREASURY OF MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

The "Song of Roland"

THE "Arthur Legends" have so preëmpted interest for English speaking people that we are not a little inclined to forget that there is a cycle of poetic stories that have gathered about Charlemagne that are as interesting and significant in literary value as those about Arthur. The most important of these is the *Chanson de Roland,* or "Song of Roland." This is an heroic poem of some four thousand ten-syllable lines. The subject of it is the fall of Roland or Orlando, the bravest of Charlemagne's twelve peers, in the battle of Roncesvalles. As we shall see, the Spanish version of the story which makes Bernardo del Carpio the hero of the other side of the conflict is quite different from the French. Such differences have been known to occur in much more serious history in times much nearer to us. Neither of the great epic ballads is strictly historical though undoubtedly there are many historical elements in both of them.

According to the French version, Marsile from the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, feigned submission to Charlemagne and with help from a traitorous peer, Ganelon, succeeded in convincing the great Emperor of

the West, that his main army was no longer needed, so he led it back to France. Roland took Charlemagne's place at the post of danger. With him was his friend, Oliver, to whose sister he was betrothed. Such friendship between men has ever been a popular romantic element in historical stories. The two palladins were equally adventurous and equally brave. Hence our proverb, "a Roland for an Oliver," as suggesting an equal trade. They were so equal in physical force that once, according to an old story, they fought together for five days without either winning the victory. Both now recognized the danger that they were in when the Spaniards and Moors gathered to attack them. Avid of the glory that would come if he were to win the fight without help from Charlemagne, Roland refused to blow the horn, or olifant, as the old-fashioned word for it was, that would bring the great Charles back to their assistance. Like the English King Henry V at Agincourt he felt that there would be all the more glory to share among his little group of soldiers should they win the battle without reinforcements. When he did blow it it was too late, but the Emperor heard it and hurried back only to find his two palladins, Roland and Oliver, dead and the flower of his troops which he had left with them wiped out.

The story is told in the *Chanson de Roland,* that well known French epic, or *Chanson de Geste,* usually ascribed to Turoldus or Theroulde, commonly said to have been a Norman trouvêre of the eleventh century. This was first published just about a century ago. Altogether in about four thousand lines it tells of the death of Roland with the other palladins of Charlemagne at

Roncesvalles and Charlemagne's vengeance for this slaughter.

In the introduction to the English version, "The Song of Roland," translated by Moncrieff, Chesterton reminds readers that most Englishmen "remember reading in the school histories of their childhood that at the battle of Hastings, Taillefer, the jongleur, went in front of the Norman army throwing his sword in the air and singing the "Song of Roland." Manifestly as Chesterton points out, the jongleur must at least have selected extracts or favorite passages or the battle would have been unduly delayed. Hastings, or as it is now called by historians, Senlac, was fought in 1066 so that already a little after the middle of the eleventh century this poem was considered to have an appeal to the hearts of warriors that would arouse them to do deeds of bravery. There is no doubt at all that it is a stirring account of a battle that the participants on the French side knew was to the death and that it recounts a very brave incident in the story of mankind. The poet knew how to touch human emotions and gathers into his poems most of the elements that affect the human heart deeply.

Only certain stanzas can be selected from the four hundred ten-line stanzas of which the poem consists. We begin with the recognition by Oliver of the fact that the hosts of the Saracens are gathering in large numbers to attack them:

LXXX

Oliver mounts upon a lofty peak,
Looks to his right along the valley green,
The pagan tribes approaching there appear;
He calls Rollanz, his companion, to see:

"What sound is this, come out of Spain, we hear,
What hauberks bright, what helmets these that gleam?
They'll smite our Franks with fury past belief,
He knew it, Guenes, the traitor and the thief,
Who chose us out before the King our chief."
Answers the count Rollanz: "Olivier, cease,
That man is my good-father; hold thy peace."

LXXXI

Upon a peak is Oliver mounted,
Kingdom of Spain he sees before him spread,
And Sarrazins, so many gatherèd.
Their helmets gleam, with gold are jewellèd,
Also their shields, their hauberks orfreyèd,
Also their swords, ensigns on spears fixèd.
Rank beyond rank could not be numberèd,
So many there, no measure could he set.
In his own heart he's sore astonishèd,
Fast as he could, down from the peak hath sped,
Comes to the Franks, to them his tale hath said.

LXXXII

Says Oliver: "Pagans from there I saw;
Never on earth did any man see more.
'Gainst us their shields an hundred thousand bore,
That lacèd helms and shining hauberks wore;
And bolt upright, their bright brown spearheads shone.
Battle we'll have as never was before.
Lords of the Franks, God keep you in valour!
So hold your ground, we be not overborne!"
Then say the Franks: "Shame take him that goes off:
If we must die, then perish one and all."

LXXXIII

Says Oliver: "Pagans in force abound,
While of us Franks but very few I count;
Comrade Rollanz, your horn I pray you sound!

If Charlès hear, he'll turn his armies round."
Answers Rollanz: "A fool I should be found;
In France the Douce would perish my renown.
With Durendal I'll lay on thick and stout,
In blood the blade, to its golden hilt, I'll drown.
Felon pagans to th' pass shall not come down;
I pledge you now, to death they are all bound."

After seeing this disturbing sight, Oliver pleads with his brother knight, Roland (Rollanz in the old-fashioned spelling), to sound the olifant, but his plea is in vain and now there is nothing to do but await the attack:

LXXXIV

"Comrade Rollanz, sound the olifant, I pray;
If Charlès hear, the host he'll turn again;
Will succour us our King and baronage."
Answers Rollanz: "Never, by God, I say,
For my misdeed shall kinsmen hear the blame,
Nor France the Douce fall into evil fame!
Rather stout blows with Durendal I'll lay,
With my good sword that by my side doth sway;
Till bloodied o'er you shall behold the blade.
Felon pagans are gathered to their shame;
I pledge you now, to death they're doomed today."

LXXXV

"Comrade Rollanz, once sound your olifant!
If Charlès hear, where in the pass he stands,
I pledge you now, they'll turn again, the Franks."
"Never, by God," then answers him Rollanz,
"Shall it be said by any living man,
That for pagans I took my horn in hand!
Never by me shall men reproach my clan.
When I am come into the battle grand,
And blows lay on, by hundred, by thousand,
Of Durendal bloodied you'll see the brand.

Franks are good men; like vassals brave they'll stand:
Nay, Spanish men from death have no warrant."

LXXXVI

Says Oliver: "In this I see no blame;
I have beheld the Sarrazins of Spain;
Covered with them, the mountains and the vales,
The wastes I saw, and all the farthest plains.
A muster great they've made, this people strange;
We have of men a very little tale."
Answers Rollanz: "My anger is inflamed.
Never, please God His Angels and His Saints,
Never by me shall Frankish valour fail!
Rather I'll die than shame shall me attain.
Therefore strike on, the Emperor's love to gain."

LXXXVII

Pride hath Rollanz, wisdom Olivier hath;
And both of them shew marvellous courage;
Once they are horsed, once they have donned their arms,
Rather they'ld die than from the battle pass.
Good are the counts, and lofty their language.
Felon pagans come cantering in their wrath.
Says Oliver: "Behold and see, Rollanz,
These are right near, but Charlès is very far.
On the olifant deign now to sound a blast;
Were the King here, we should not fear damage.
Only look up towards the Pass of Aspre,
In sorrow there you'll see the whole rereward.
Who does this deed, does no more afterward."
Answers Rollanz: "Utter not such outrage!
Evil his heart that is in thought coward!
We shall remain firm in our place installed;
From us the blows shall come, from us the assault."

Roland's address to his soldiers is summed up in the expression that "pagans are come great martyrdom seek-

ing" and that no French victory was ever so great as that which they were about to win this day. The words were scarcely out of his mouth, however, before the two armies met in the clash of battle:

XCI

To Spanish pass is Rollanz now going
On Veillantif, his good steed, galloping;
He is well armed, pride is in his bearing,
He goes, so brave, his spear in hand holding,
He goes, its point against the sky turning:
A gonfalon all white thereon he's pinned,
Down to his hand flutters the golden fringe:
Noble his limbs, his face clear and smiling.
His companion goes after, following,
The men of France their warrant find in him.
Proudly he looks towards the Sarrazins,
And to the Franks sweetly, himself humbling;
And courteously has said to them this thing:
"My lords barons, go now your pace holding!
Pagans are come great martyrdom seeking;
Noble and fair reward this day shall bring,
Was never won by any Frankish King."
Upon these words the hosts are come touching.

XCII

Speaks Oliver: "No more now will I say.
Your olifant, to sound it do not deign.
Since from Carlun you'll never more have aid.
He has not heard; no fault of his, so brave.
Those with him there are never to be blamed.
So canter on, with what prowess you may!
Lords and barons, firmly your ground maintain!
Be minded well, I pray you in God's Name,
Stout blows to strike, to give as you shall take.
Forget the cry of Charlès we never may."
Upon this word the Franks cry out amain.

Who then had heard them all "Monjoie!" acclaim
Of vassalage might well recall the tale.
They canter forth, God! with what proud parade,
Pricking their spurs, the better speed to gain;
They go to strike,—what other thing could they?—
But Sarrazins are not at all afraid.
Pagans and Franks, you'ld see them now engaged.

Roland is very much touched by the slaughter of his men which he sees taking place. It is his feeling for others and not any thought of himself that finally brings him to respond to Oliver's plea to wind the olifant, though once the battle had begun Oliver declared that he would have nothing more to say and that they must fight it out for themselves:

CXXVIII

The count Rollanz great loss of his men sees,
His companion Olivier calls, and speaks:
"Sir and comrade, in God's Name, That you keeps,
Such good vassals you see lie here in heaps;
For France the Douce, fair country, may we weep,
Of such barons long desolate she'll be.
Ah! King and friend, wherefore are you not here?
How, Oliver, brother, can we achieve?
And by what means our news to him repeat?"
Says Oliver: "I know not how to seek:
Rather I'ld die than shame come of this feat."

At last Roland consents to wind the horn that he hopes will bring Charlemagne back to their assistance though now Oliver fears that it is too late and throws the responsibility for the loss of the battle on the shoulders of Roland. For the moment the great friends are at enmity and Oliver even mentions the name of his gentle sister,

Alde, the fiancéé of Roland, as one who shall surely resent the loss of the battle:

CXXIX

Then says Rollanz: "I'll wind this olifant,
If Charlès hear, where in the pass he stands,
I pledge you now they will return, the Franks."
Says Oliver: "Great shame would come of that;
And a reproach on every one, your clan,
That shall endure while each lives in the land,
When I implored, you would not do this act;
Doing it now, no praise from me you'll have:
So wind your horn, but not by courage rash,
Seeing that both your arms with blood are splashed."
Answers that count: "Fine blows I've struck them back."

CXXX

Then says Rollanz: "Strong is it now, our battle;
I'll wind my horn, so the King hears it, Charlès."
Says Oliver: "That act were not a vassal's.
When I implored you, comrade, you were wrathful.
Were the King here, we had not borne such damage.
Nor should we blame those with him there, his army."
Says Oliver: "Now by my beard, hereafter
If I may see my gentle sister Alde,
She in her arms, I swear, shall never clasp you."

CXXXI

Then says Rollanz: "Wherefore so wroth with me?"
He answers him: "Comrade, it was your deed:
Vassalage comes by sense, and not folly;
Prudence more worth is than stupidity.
Here are Franks dead, all for your trickery;
No service more to Carlun may we yield.
My lord were here now, had you trusted me,
And fought and won this battle then had we,

Taken or slain were the king Marsilie.
In your prowess, Rollanz, no good we've seen!
Charlès the great in vain your aid will seek—
None such as he till God His Judgment speak;—
Here must you die, and France in shame be steeped;
Here perishes our loyal company,
Before this night great severance and grief."

The archbishop fearing that the breach between the palladins, Roland and Oliver, may prove another factor for their defeat, spurs to give his advice. He feels that the winding of the olifant will now mean very little for them, but he faces his fate with straightforward courage and Roland takes his advice and the note goes out that over thirty leagues was to be heard and make Charlemagne and his army understand that a great battle was in progress and that his help was needed:

CXXXII

That Archbishop has heard them, how they spoke,
His horse he pricks with his fine spurs of gold,
Coming to them he takes up his reproach:
"Sir Oliver, and you, Sir Rollant, both,
For God I pray, do not each other scold!
No help it were to us, the horn to blow,
But, none the less, it may be better so;
The King will come, with vengeance that he owes;
These Spanish men never away shall go.
Our Franks here, each descending from his horse,
Will find us dead, and limb from body torn;
They'll take us hence, on biers and litters borne;
With pity and with grief for us they'll mourn;
They'll bury each in some old minster-close;
No wolf nor swine nor dog shall gnaw our bones."
Answers Rollant: "Sir, very well you spoke."

CXXXIII

Rollant hath set the olifant to his mouth,
He grasps it well, and with great virtue sounds.
High are those peaks, afar it rings and loud,
Thirty great leagues they hear its echoes mount.
So Charlès heard, and all his comrades round;
Then said that King: "Battle they do, our counts."
And Guenelun answered, contrarious:
"That were a lie, in any other mouth."

CXXXIV

The Count Rollanz, with sorrow and with pangs,
And with great pain sounded his olifant:
Out of his mouth the clear blood leaped and ran,
About his brain the very temples cracked.
Loud is its voice, that horn he holds in hand;
Charlès hath heard, where in the pass he stands,
And Neimès hears, and listen all the Franks.
Then says the King: "I hear his horn, Rollant's;
He'll never sound, but he were in combat."
Answers him Guenes: "It is no battle, that.
Now are you old, blossoming white and blanched,
Yet by such words you still appear infant.
You know full well the great pride of Rollant;
Marvel it is, God stays so tolerant.
Nobles he took, not waiting your command;
Thence issued forth the Sarrazins, a band
With vassalage had fought against Rollant;
He slew them first, with Durendal his brand,
Then washed their blood with water from the land;
So what he'd done might not be seen of man.
He for a hare goes all day, horn in hand;
Before his peers in foolish jest he brags.
No race 'neath heav'n in field him dare attack.
So canter on! Nay, wherefore hold we back?
Terra Major is far away, our land."

Charlemagne's army is soon in battle array and hastens to their assistance. The Emperor himself is in the van but all the soldiers fear for the fate of Roland:

CXXXVII

That even-tide is light as was the day;
Their armour shines beneath the sun's clear ray,
Hauberks and helms throw off a dazzling flame,
And blazoned shields, flowered in bright array,
Also their spears, with golden ensigns gay.
That Emperour, he canters on with rage,
And all the Franks with wonder and dismay;
There is not one can bitter tears restrain,
And for Rollant they're very sore afraid.

CXXXVIII

High were the peaks and shadowy and grand,
The valleys deep, the rivers swiftly ran.
Trumpets they blew in rear and in the van,
Till all agin answered that olifant.
That Emperour canters with fury mad,
And all the Franks dismay and wonder have;
There is not one but weeps and waxes sad
And all pray God that He will guard Rollant
Till in the field together they may stand;
There by his side they'll strike as well they can.
But what avail? No good there is in that;
They're not in time; too long have they held back.

CXXXIX

In his great rage on canters Charlemagne;
Over his sark his beard is flowing plain.
Barons of France, in haste they spur and strain;
There is not one that can his wrath contain
That they are not with Rollant the Captain,
Whereas he fights the Sarrazins of Spain.
If he be struck, will not one soul remain.

—God! Sixty men are all now in his train!
Never a king had better Capitains.

CXL

Rollant regards the barren mountain-sides;
Dead men of France, he sees so many lie,
And weeps for them as fits a gentle knight:
"Lords and barons, may God to you be kind!
And all your souls redeem for Paradise!
And let you there mid holy flowers lie!
Better vassals than you saw never I.
Ever you've served me, and so long a time,
By you Carlon hath conquered kingdoms wide;
That Emperour reared you for evil plight!
Douce land of France, O very precious clime,
Laid desolate by such a sour exile!
Barons of France, for me I've seen you die,
And no support, no warrant could I find;
God be your aid, Who never yet hath lied!
I must not fail now, brother, by your side;
Save I be slain, for sorrow shall I die.
Sir companion, let us again go strike!"

Then comes the description of the death of Roland after he has prayed for forgiveness for his sins, mortal and venial, from the hour of his birth until this day when life is ending. The brave knight talks to the Almighty as he would to his Emperor and God sent him down His angel cherubim to bear his soul into Paradise:

CLXXV

But Rollant feels he's no more time to seek;
Looking to Spain, he lies on a sheer peak,
And with one hand upon his breast he beats:
"*Mea Culpa!* God, by Thy Virtues clean
Me from my sins, the mortal and the mean,
Which from the hour that I was born have been

Until this day, when life is ended here!"
Holds out his glove towards God, as he speaks;
Angels descend from heaven on that scene.

CLXXVI

The count Rollanz, beneath a pine he sits;
Turning his eyes towards Spain, he begins
Remembering so many divers things:
So many lands where he went conquering,
And France the Douce, the heroes of his kin,
And Charlemagne, his lord who nourished him.
Nor can he help but weep and sigh at this.
But his own self, he's not forgotten him,
He owns his faults, and God's forgiveness bids:
"Very Father, in Whom no falsehood is,
Saint Lazaron from death Thou didst remit,
And Daniel save from the lion's pit;
My soul in me preserve from all perils
And from the sins I did in life commit!"
His right-hand glove, to God he offers it;
Saint Gabriel from 's hand hath taken it.
Over his arm his head bows down and slips
He joins his hands: and so is life finish'd.
God sent him down His angel cherubin,
And Saint Michael, we worship in peril;
And by their side Saint Gabriel alit;
So the count's soul they bare to Paradis.

Charlemagne executes summary vengeance on those who had slain his palladins and the conclusion of the "Song of Roland" finds the Emperor, his justice achieved, his mighty wrath abated, ready for rest and peace, but peace there is none. As the King in his vaulted chamber sleeps, St. Gabriel is come from God to summon Charles to other work for Christianity. As Chesterton says in the last paragraph of his introduction to the

"Song of Roland," "Charlemagne the Christian Emperor has at last established his empire in quiet; has done justice almost in the manner of the Day of Judgment and sleeps as it were upon his throne with a peace almost like that of Paradise. And there appears to him the angel of God crying aloud to him that his arms are needed in a new and distant land and that he must take up again the endless march of his days. And the great king tears his long white beard and cries out against his restless life. The poem ends, as it were, with a vision and vista of wars against the barbarians; and the vision is true. For that war is never ended which defends the sanity of the world against all the stark anarchy and rending negations which rage against it forever. That war is never finished in this world and the grass is hardly grown on the graves of our own friends who fell in it."

No wonder that Chesterton says that, "That high note of the forlorn hope of a host at bay and a battle against odds without end is the note on which the great French epic ends." He adds, "I know nothing more moving in poetry than that strange and unexpected ending; that splendidly inconclusive conclusion." For there is no peace in life, and there are always new battles to be fought, and life is hard indeed and there are the tears of things, but life must be lived bravely and there is nothing to do but respond to the next messenger that summons to the help of mankind. The last paragraph of the "Song of Roland" runs:

> When the Emperour his justice hath achieved,
> His mighty wrath's abated from its heat,
> And Bramimunde has christening received;

Passes the day, the darkness is grown deep,
And now that King in 's vaulted chamber sleeps.
Saint Gabriel is come from God, and speaks:
"Summon the hosts, Charlès, of thine Empire,
Go thou by force into the land of Bire,
King Vivien thou'lt succour there, at Imphe,
In the city, which pagans have besieged.
The Christians there implore thee and beseech."
Right loth to go, that Emperour was he:

"God! said the King: "My life is hard indeed!"
Tears filled his eyes, he tore his snowy beard.

CHAPTER II

Spanish Epic Ballads

THE literatures of the different countries of Europe in the latter part of the Middle Ages are eminently national, and mirror with quite wonderful appropriateness the characteristics of the various peoples. This is true even when similar subjects are treated from nearly the same standpoint by the two Teutonic nations, the Germans and the English. The Norman admixture in the English blood with the basic Saxon elements modified the English materially and their literature has a character all its own. Parsifal and Galahad are national as well as poetic heroes with a distinction of character that makes them of abiding interest for all nations. Practically every nation in Europe finds at this time some striking expression of its national feeling that has been among its most cherished classics ever since.

The first of these in time is "The Cid," written in Spain at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. This old-fashioned Spanish ballad might be expected to have little interest for modern readers and yet few scholars of the past hundred years have failed to be interested in this literary treasure. Critics of all nations have been unstinted in their praise of it. Since the Schlegels, Frederic and August, called world attention to Spanish literature, it has been considered almost as unpardonable for anyone who pretended to

literary culture to miss a reference to "The Cid" as it would be to miss a reference to "Don Quixote."

As is true of all the national epics founded upon a series of ballads which have been collecting in the mouths of the people for several centuries until a great poetic genius came to give them their supreme expression, there has been some doubt expressed as to the single authorship of "The Cid." We shall find the same problem to be solved when we come to discuss the "Nibelungenlied." In the mid-nineteenth century the fashion of the critics was for insisting on divided authorship. That tendency is no longer prevalent. At that time many scholars following the initiative of Wolf, and the German separatist critics declared even that the Homeric poems were due to more than one mind. There are still some who cling to this idea in reference to many of these primal national epics, but at present most literary men of any distinction are quite content to accept the idea of single authorship. It is either that or accept the impossible alternative of two or more poets in the same age of more or less equal genius.

With regard to "The Cid," Fitzmaurice Kelly in his "History of Spanish Literature" in the "Literatures of the World" series says very simply:

"There is a unity of conception and of language which forbids our accepting the *Poema (del Cid)* as the work of several hands; and the division of the poem into several *cantares* is managed with a discretion which argues a single artistic intelligence. The first part closes with the marriage of the hero's daughters; the second with the shame of the Infantes de Carrion, and the proud an-

nouncement that the Kings of Spain are sprung from the Cid's loins. In both, the singer rises to the level of his subject, but his chiefest gust is in the recital of some brilliant deed of arms."

The Spanish ballad epic is a characteristic example of the epics formed by the earliest poetic genius of a country, on the basis of the patriotic stories of national origin that had been accumulating for centuries. Of course the Cid had to be the Christian hero who did most in his time against the Moslem in Spain. So humanly interesting has his story been made, and so glorious have been his deeds as recorded by the poets, that there has been even some doubt of his existence expressed, but that he was a genuine historical character seems to be clear. Many people will recall the Canons' argument in the forty-ninth chapter of "Don Quixote" in which Cervantes, evidently speaking for himself, says: "That there was a Cid no one will deny and likewise a Bernardo del Carpio, but that they performed all the exploits ascribed to them, I believe there is good reason to doubt." The Cid derives his name from the Arabic "Seid" which means "Lord," and owes his usual epithet, El Campeador (champion) to the fact that he was the actual champion of the Christians against the Moors at the end of the eleventh century. How gloriously his warlike exploits have been described may be best appreciated from the following description of his charge at Alcocer:

"With bucklers braced before their breasts, with lances
pointing low,
With stooping crests and heads bent down above the saddle-
bow,

All firm of hand and high of heart they roll upon the foe.
And he that in good hour was born, his clarion voice rings out,
And clear above the clang of arms is heard his battle-shout,
'Among them, gentleman! Strike home for the love of charity!
The Champion of Bivar is here—Ruy Diaz—I am he!'
Then bearing where Bermuez still maintains unequal fight,
Three hundred lances down they come, their pennons
flickering white;
Down go three hundred Moors to earth, a man to every blow;
And when they wheel, three hundred more, as charging back
they go,
It was a sight to see the lances rise and fall that day;
The shivered shields and riven mail, to see how thick they lay;
The pennons that went in snow-white come out a gory red;
The horses running riderless, the riders lying dead;
While Moors call on Muhamed, and 'St. James!' the Christians
cry."

While the martial interest of such early poems would be generally conceded, it would usually be considered that they would be little likely to have significant domestic, and even what might be called romantic interests. The Cid's marriage is the result of not what would exactly be called a romance nowadays, though in ruder times there may have been a certain sense of sentimental reparation in it at least. He had killed in fair fight the father of a young woman, who being thus left without a protector appealed to the King to appoint one for her. In the troublous Middle Ages an heiress was as likely to be snapped up by some unsuitable suitor, more literally but with quite as much haste, as in a more cultured epoch. The king knew no one whom he could trust so well with the guardianship of the rich and fair young orphan as the Cid, of whose bravery and honor he had had many

proofs. Accordingly he suggested him as a protector and the Cid himself generously realizing how much the fair Jimena had lost by the death of her father consented, and in a famous passage of the poem, a little shocking to modern ideas, it must be confessed, frankly states his feelings in the matter:

"And now before the altar the bride and bridegroom stand,
And when to fair Jimena the Cid stretched forth his hand,
He spake in great confusion: 'Thy father have I slain
Not treacherously, but face to face, my just revenge to gain
For cruel wrong; a man I slew, a man I give to thee;
In place of thy dead father, a husband find in me.'
And all who heard well liked the man, approving what he said;
Thus Rodrigo the Castilian his stately bride did wed."

There are tender domestic scenes between the Cid and his wife and his daughters, which serve to show how sincere was his affection and with what sympathetic humanity a great poet knew how to depict the tender natural relations which have an interest for all times. Some of these domestic scenes are not unworthy to be placed beside Homer's picture of the parting of Hector and Andromache, though there is more naïve self-consciousness in the work of the Spanish bard, than in that of his more artistic colleague of the Grecian olden times. There is particularly a famous picture of the duties of noble ladies in Spain of this time and of the tender solicitude of a father for his daughters' innocence, that is quite beyond expectation at the hands of a poet whose forte was evidently war and its alarms, rather than the expression of the ethical qualities of home life. The following passage, descriptive of the Cid's parting from his wife,

will give some idea of these qualities better than could be conveyed in any other way:

" 'Thou knowest well, señora,' he said before he went,
'To parting from each other our love doth not consent;
But love and joyance never may stand in duty's way,
And when the king commandeth the noble must obey.
Now let discretion guide thee, thou art of worthy name;
While I am parted from thee, let none in thee find blame.
Employ thy hours full wisely, and tend thy household well,
Be never slothful, woe and death with idleness do dwell.
Lay by thy costly dresses until I come again,
For in the husband's absence let wives in dress be plain;
And look well to thy daughters, nor let them be aware,
Lest they comprehend the danger because they see thy care,
And lose unconscious innocence. At home they must abide,
For the safety of the daughter is at the mother's side.
Be serious with thy servants, with strangers on thy guard,
With friends be kind and friendly, and well thy household ward,
To no one show my letters, thy best friends may not see,
Lest reading them they also may guess of thine to me,
And if good news they bring thee, and woman-like dost seek
The sympathy of others, with thy daughters only speak.

* * * * * * *

Farewell, farewell, Jimena, the trumpet's call I hear!
One last embrace,' and then he mounts the steed without a peer."

The touch of paternal solicitude and prudence in the passage we have put in italics is so apparently modern, that it can scarcely fail to be a source of surprise, coming as it does from that crude period at the end of the twelfth century when such minute psychological observation as to young folks' ways would be little expected, and least of all in the rough warrior hero or his poet creator, whose

notions of right and wrong are, to judge from many passages of the poem, so much coarser than those of our time.

Lockhart in his "Ancient Spanish Ballads" has translated the description of the Cid as a young man which perhaps furnishes the best material for understanding the popular estimation in which the Cid was held:

THE YOUNG CID

Now rides Diego Laynez to kiss the good King's hand;
Three hundred men of gentry go with him from his land;
Among them, young Rodrigo, the proud Knight of Bivar;
The rest on mules are mounted, he on his horse of war.

They ride in glittering gowns of soye,—he harnessed like a lord;
There is no gold about the boy, but the crosslet of his sword;
The rest have gloves of sweet perfume,—he gauntlets strong of mail;
They broidered cap and flaunting plume,—he crest untaught to quail.

All talking with each other thus along their way they passed,
But now they've come to Burgos, and met the King at last.
When they came near his nobles, a whisper through them ran,—
"He rides amidst the gentry that slew the Count Lozan."

With very haughty gesture Rodrigo reined his horse,
Right scornfully he shouted, when he heard them so discourse:
"If any of his kinsmen or vassals dare appear,
The man to give them answer, on horse or foot, is here."

"The devil ask the question!" thus muttered all the band;—
With that they all alighted, to kiss the good King's hand,—
All but the proud Rodrigo, he in his saddle stayed,—
Then turned to him his father (you may hear the words he said):

"Now, 'light, my son, I pray thee, and kiss the good king's
hand,
He is our lord, Rodrigo; we hold of him our land."
But when Rodrigo heard him, he looked in sulky sort,—
I wot the words he answered, they were both cold and short.

"Had any other said it, his pains had well been paid,
But thou, sir, art my father, thy word must be obeyed."
With that he sprung down lightly, before the King to kneel,
But as the knee was bending, out leapt his blade of steel.

The King drew back in terror, when he saw the sword was
bare;
"Stand back, stand back, Rodrigo! in the devil's name, beware!
Your looks bespeak a creature of father Adam's mould,
But in your wild behavior you're like some lion bold."

When Rodrigo heard him so, he leapt into his seat,
And thence he made his answer, with visage nothing sweet,—
"I'd think it little honor to kiss a kingly palm,
And if my father's kissed it thereof ashamed I am."

When he these words had uttered, he turned him from the gate,
His true three hundred gentles behind him followed straight.
If with good gowns they came that day, with better arms they
went;
And if their mules behind did stay, with horses they're content.

There are tenderer touches of the Cid's character to be found in the chronicles and the ballads. Lockhart in his introduction to the "Ballad of the Cid and the Leper" says, "Like our own Robert de Bruce the great Spanish hero is represented as exhibiting on many occasions great gentleness of disposition and compassion." What is thus exhibited by the Cid with regard to the leper is exactly what we know of King Louis IX of France but also of his cousin, King Ferdinand III of Spain, both of whom

are canonized saints. Here is Lockhart's version of the ballad. The incident is supposed to take place while the Cid was making the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella to which so many Spaniards went both to pray for favors to come and in thanksgiving for favors done them:

THE CID AND THE LEPER

He has ta'en some twenty gentlemen along with him to go,
For he will pay that ancient vow he to Saint James doth owe;
To Compostella, where the shrine doth by the altar stand,
The good Rodrigo de Bivar is riding through the land.

Where'er he goes, much alms he throws, to feeble folks and poor;
Beside the way for him they pray, him blessings to procure.
For, God and Mary Mother, their heavenly grace to win,
His hand was ever bountiful: great was his joy therein.

And there, in the middle of the path, a leper did appear;
In a deep slough the leper lay; to help would none come near,
Though earnestly he thence did cry: "For God our Saviour's sake,
From out this fearful jeopardy a Christian brother take."

When Roderick heard that piteous word, he from his horse came down;
For all they said no stay he made, that noble champion;
He reached his hand to pluck him forth, of fear was no account,
Then mounted on his steed of worth, and made the leper mount.

Behind him rode the leprous man; when to their hostelrie
They came, he made him eat with him at table cheerfully;
While all the rest from the poor guest with loathing shrunk away,
To his own bed the wretch he led, beside him there he lay.

All at the mid-hour of the night, while good Rodrigo slept,
A breath came from the leprosite which through his shoulders crept;
Right through the body, by the heart, passed forth that breathing cold;
I wot he leaped up with a start, in terrors manifold.

He groped for him in the bed, but him he could not find,
Through the dark chamber groped he, with very anxious mind;
Loudly he lifted up his voice, with speed a lamp was brought,
Yet nowhere was the leper seen, though far and near they sought.

He turned him to his chamber, God wot! perplexèd sore
With that which had befallen—when lo! his face before,
There stood a man all clothed in vesture shining white.
Thus said the vision: "Sleepest thou, or wakest thou, Sir Knight?"

"I sleep not," quoth Rodrigo; "but tell me who are thou.
For, in the midst of darkness, much light is on thy brow."
"I am the holy Lazarus, I come to speak with thee;
I am the same poor leper thou savedst for charity.

"Not in vain the trial, nor in vain thy victory hath been;
God favors thee, for that my pain thou didst relieve yestreen.
There shall be honor with thee, in battle and in peace,
Success in all thy doings, and plentiful increase.

"Strong enemies shall not prevail thy greatness to undo;
Thy name shall make men's cheeks full pale—Christians and Moslem too;
A death of honor shalt thou die, such grace to thee is given,
Thy soul shall part victoriously, and be received in heaven."

When he these gracious words had said, the spirit vanished quite.
Rodrigo rose and knelt him down,—he knelt till morning light;

Unto the heavenly Father, and Mary Mother dear,
He made his prayer right humbly, till dawned the morning clear.*

The other great hero of the Spaniards of the end of the Middle Ages was Bernardo del Carpio who lived very probably during the ninth century and fought with great distinction against the Moors. He was of royal blood, being a nephew of Alphonso the Chaste (791-842) who defeated Mohammed, the Moorish governor of Merida, in 830. The struggle with the Moors for the possession of Spain was just coming to a head at this time. Alphonso the Chaste was succeeded by Alphonso III, surnamed the Great, who was king not only of Asturias, as his father had been, but also of Leon (866-910). The intense martial activity of the period in which Bernardo del Carpio's life was passed will be readily understood. According to Spanish tradition Bernardo del Carpio was the leader of the Spanish troops which defeated Roland at Roncesvalles. It is easy to understand then that he has been a favorite subject of Spanish poets and that his exploits are celebrated in many Spanish ballads. In the Golden Age of Spanish literature, he was the subject of dramas by Lope de Vega and other dramatists.

*J. G. Lockhart, the translator of these ancient Spanish ballads, was the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott. A hundred years later than he wrote them some of his notes with regard to these ballads are more than a little amusing because of the religious bigotry which they display. In his introduction to *The Cid and the Leper* he says that "the minstrels of Spain never losing an opportunity of gratifying the superstitious propensities of their audience, are sure to let no incident of this kind in their champion's history pass without a miracle." He has some rather invidious remarks dictated by the same spirit of intolerance with regard to that gentlest and greatest of monarchs, St. Louis (IX) of France. Lockhart wrote out of the spirit of his time. Sir Walter Scott's sympathetic treatment of medieval subjects though not without fault did much to begin the change that in the past hundred years has come over this prejudice. In our day the blood of Scott's descendants flows in Catholic veins. When people come to know more about the Church they have less of bigotry and misunderstanding.

As Ticknor in his "Spanish Literature" (vol. 1, 123) has noted, the most interesting phase of the life of Bernardo del Carpio concerns his efforts to secure the release of his father who was in prison. Bernardo had not known who his father was, and when he learned, all his efforts were centered on the one purpose of procuring his pardon.

The subject of the ballads with regard to him is mainly the double-dealing of the King in his regard. The King promises repeatedly to release the Count de Saldaña, and as often breaks his word. Finally the King announces that they shall go forth to meet his father and they ride toward the party supposed to be bringing him. Sure enough the father's figure is seen mounted on a horse that is galloping toward them but when Bernardo rushes to greet his father, he finds that it is his corpse that has been mounted and not his father. Bernardo's rebellion after this has been the subject of old chronicles as well as ballads but the ballads seem to have come into the form in which we know them about the beginning of the thirteenth century. Portions of them used to be quoted because of their dramatic quality in the old-fashioned collections of pieces for elocution and some of them are very well known for that reason.

Lockhart in his "Ancient Spanish Ballads, Historical and Romantic," has given an excellent translation of some of these Bernardo del Carpio ballads. Bernardo was the son of the Count of Saldaña and Donna Jimena, sister of Alphonso the Chaste. The King had been very much put out by this mesalliance of his sister with a simple nobleman not of royal blood and he actually impris-

oned the count in the castle of Luna and caused him to be deprived of his sight. The son of this marriage, however, Bernardo del Carpio, proved to have all the courage and energetic personality of his royal ancestors. Having no children himself, Alphonso, according to the Spanish chroniclers, invited the Emperor Charlemagne into Spain and proposed to give the French Emperor the right to succeed to the Spanish crown on condition that he would help the Spaniards against the Moors. The nobility, with Bernardo as their leader, refused to consent to any such arrangement and would not receive the Frenchman as the heir of their crown. Charlemagne persisted in his claim but was deceived into thinking that most of his troops were not needed in Spain. Only a small body of his troops were left behind and they were attacked in the renowned pass of Roncesvalles. The French were defeated and the celebrated Roland, or Orlando, was slain. The victory was ascribed chiefly to the prowess on the field of Bernardo del Carpio.

Lockhart considers that the ballad describing the enthusiasm excited among the Leonese, that is the inhabitants of the Spanish kingdom of Leon, when Bernardo first raised his standard to oppose the progress of Charlemagne's army, is one of those that deserve to be recalled in the modern time. This series of ballads gives the other side of the picture from that which is presented by French writers in "The Song of Roland":

THE MARCH OF BERNARDO DEL CARPIO

With three thousand men of Leon, from the city Bernard goes,
To protect the soil Hispanian from the spear of Frankish foes;
From the city which is planted in the midst between the seas,
To preserve the name and glory of old Pelayo's victories.

The peasant hears upon his field the trumpet of the knight,—
He quits his team for spear and shield and garniture of might;
The shepherd hears it 'mid the mist,—he flingeth down his crook,
And rushes from the mountain like a tempest-troubled brook.

The youth who shows a maiden's chin, whose brows have ne'er been bound
The helmet's heavy ring within, gains manhood from the sound;
The hoary sire beside the fire forgets his feebleness,
Once more to feel the cap of steel a warrior's ringlets press.

As through the glen his spears did gleam, these soldiers from the hills,
They swelled his host, as mountain-stream receives the roaring rills;
They round his banner flocked, in scorn of haughty Charlemagne,
And thus upon their swords are sworn the faithful sons of Spain.

"Free were we born," 'tis thus they cry, "though to our King we owe
The homage and the fealty behind his crest to go;
By God's behest our aid he shares, but God did ne'er command
That we should leave our children heirs of an enslavèd land.

"Our breasts are not so timorous, nor are our arms so weak,
Nor are our veins so bloodless, that we our vow should break,
To sell our freedom for the fear of Prince or Paladin;
At least we'll sell our birthright dear,—no bloodless prize they'll win.

"At least King Charles, if God decrees he must be Lord of Spain,
Shall witness that the Leonese were not aroused in vain;
He should bear witness that we died as lived our sires of old,
Nor only of Numantium's pride shall minstrel tales be told.

"The lion that hath bathed his paws in seas of Lybian gore,
Shall he not battle for the laws and liberties of yore?
Anointed cravens may give gold to whom it likes them well,
But steadfast heart and spirit bold, Alphonso ne'er shall sell."

Bernardo demands as the reward of his prowess on the field of Roncesvalles the freedom of his father, but the King refuses that grace though not without giving Bernardo hope that a pardon would be forthcoming. Bernardo continued to hope against hope for some time but at length, wearied out of all patience, by the cruelty of which his father was a victim and the double dealing of the King with himself, determined to quit the court and seek an alliance among the Moors. He fortified himself in the castle of Carpio and made frequent incursions into the territory of Leon pillaging and plundering. The King raised an army and besieged him in his stronghold but the defense was so gallant that there appeared no prospect of success. Alphonso's generals entreated the King to offer Bernardo immediate possession of his father's person if he would surrender his castle. Bernardo at once consented to this exchange. The King treacherously gave orders to have the Count Saldaña put to death at once in his prison.

According to the chroniclers when Count Sancho of Saldaña was dead, "They clothed him in splendid attire, mounted him on horseback and so led him toward Salamanca where his son was expecting his arrival. As they drew nigh the city, the King and Bernardo rode out to meet them and when Bernardo saw his father approaching he exclaimed, "Oh God, is the Count of Saldaña indeed coming?"

"Look where he is," cried the King, "and now go and greet him whom you so long desired to see." Bernardo went forward and took his father's hand to kiss it, but when he felt the cold dead weight of the hand and saw the livid face of the corpse he cried out: "Ah, Don Sancho Diaz, I am an unhappy son. Thou art dead and I have given my stronghold for you and now I have lost all." He escaped from the hands of the King who had hoped to serve him as he had served his father and Bernardo proceeded to celebrate the obsequies of the dead count in a worthy manner:

THE FUNERAL OF THE COUNT OF SALDANA

All in the centre of the choir Bernardo's knees are bent,—
Before him, for his murdered sire, yawns the old monument.

His kinsmen of the Carpio blood are kneeling at his back,
With knightly friends and vassals good, all garbed in weeds of black.

He comes to make the obsequies of a basely-slaughtered man,
And tears are running down from eyes whence ne'er before they ran.

His head is bowed upon the stone; his heart, albeit full sore,
Is strong as when in days by-gone he rode o'er Frank and Moor;

And now between his teeth he mutters, that none his words can hear;
And now the voice of wrath he utters, in curses loud and clear.

He stoops him o'er his father's shroud, his lips salute the bier;
He communes with the corse aloud, as if none else were near.

His right hand doth his sword unsheath, his left doth pluck his beard;

And while his liegemen held their breath, these were the words they heard:—

"Go up, go up, thou blessed ghost, into the hands of God;
Go, fear not lest revenge be lost, when Carpio's blood hath flowed.

"The steel that drank the blood of France, the arm thy foe that shielded,
Still, father, thirsts that burning lance, and still thy son can wield it."

After the obsequies of his father, Bernardo with ten chosen knights made his way into the presence of King Alphonso and dared to tell him to his teeth what he thought of his conduct and his breach of royal faith. Once more the translation is by Lockhart:

BERNARDO AND ALPHONSO

With some good ten of his chosen men, Bernardo hath appeared
Before them all in the palace hall, the lying King to beard;
With cap in hand and eye on ground, he came in reverend guise,
But ever and anon he frowned, and flame broke from his eyes.

"A curse upon thee," cries the King, "who comest unbid to me;
But what from traitor's blood should spring, save traitors like to thee?
His sire, Lords, had a traitor's heart; perchance our champion brave
May think it were a pious part to share Don Sancho's grave."

"Whoever told this tale the King hath rashness to repeat,"
Cries Bernard, "here my gage I fling before *the liar's* feet!
No treason was in Sancho's blood, no stain in mine doth lie;
Below the throne what knight will own the coward calumny?

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA
09723

"The blood that I like water shed, when Roland did advance,
By secret traitors hired and led, to make us slaves of France;
The life of King Alphonso I saved at Roncesval,—
Your words, Lord King, are recompense abundant for it all.

"Your horse was down,—your hope was flown,—I saw the falchion shine,
That soon had drunk your royal blood, had I not ventured mine;
But memory soon of service done deserteth the ingrate;
You've thanked the son for life and crown by the father's bloody fate.

"Ye swore upon your kingly faith, to set Don Sancho free;
But, curse upon your paltering breath, the light he ne'er did see;
He died in dungeon cold and dim, by Alphonso's base decree,
And visage blind, and stiffened limb, were all they gave to me.

"The King that swerveth from his word hath stained his purple black;
No Spanish lord will draw the sword behind a liar's back;
But noble vengeance shall be mine, an open hate I'll show,—
The King hath injured Carpio's line, and Bernard is his foe."

"Seize, seize him!" loud the King doth scream; "There are a thousand here!
Let his foul blood this instant stream. What! caitiffs, do ye fear?
Seize, seize the traitor!"—But not one to move a finger dareth,
Bernardo standeth by the throne, and calm his sword he bareth.

He drew the falchion from the sheath, and held it up on high,
And all the hall was still as death; cries Bernard: "Here am I,—
And here is the sword that owns no lord, excepting heaven and me;

Fain would I know who dares his point,—King, Conde, or
Grandee."

Then to his mouth the horn he drew (it hung below his cloak):
His ten true men the signal knew, and through the ring they
broke;
With helm on head, and blade in hand, the knights the circle
brake,
And back the lordings 'gan to stand, and the false King to
quake.

"Ha! Bernard," quoth Alphonso, "what means this warlike
guise?
Ye know full well I jested,—ye know your worth I prize."
But Bernard turned upon his heel, and smiling passed away;
Long rued Alphonso and his realm the jesting of that day.

CHAPTER III

The "Arthur Legends"

NEXT after "The Cid" in time, the poetic work that was destined to have an influence on all succeeding generations was the "Arthur Legends" as brought to high poetic expression in England. As in the case of "The Cid," these stories of King Arthur's court, his knights and his Round Table, had long been a favorite subject of ballad poets among the English people. Just where they originated is not clear, though it seems most likely that the original inspiration came from Celtic sources. The oldest ballads had little literary quality and it was not until about the beginning of the thirteenth century that the stories were cast into the form they have to a great degree retained since. They passed through the alembic of the mind of a great poetic genius which refined away the dross and left only the pure gold of sympathetic human emotions. To whom we owe this transformation is not known with absolute surety, though the literary and historical criticism of the last quarter of a century seem to have made it clear that the work must be attributed to Walter Map, or Mapes, an English priest who died during the first decade of the thirteenth century.

His claims to the authorship of the Grail Legend in its artistic completeness and to the invention of the character of Lancelot, one of the great triumphs of the "Arthur Legends," as they were related at this time, have been

much discussed by French and English critics. This discussion has perhaps been best summarized by Mr. Henry Morley, the late Professor of Literature at the University of London, whose third volume of "English Writers" contains an immense amount of valuable information with regard to the literary history, not alone of England at this time, but practically of all the countries of Europe. Mr. Morley's plan was conceived with a breadth of view that makes his work a very interesting and authoritative guide in the literary matters of the time. His summation of the position of critical opinion with regard to the authorship of the "Arthur Legends" deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

"The Arthurian Romances were, according to this opinion, all perfectly detached tales, till in the twelfth century Robert de Borron (let us add, at Map's suggestion) translated the first Romance of the Saint Graal as an introduction to the series, and shortly afterwards Walter Map added his "Quest of the Graal," "Lancelot" and "Mort Artus." The way for such work had been prepared by Geoffrey of Monmouth's bold setting forward of King Arthur as a personage of history, in a book that was much sought and discussed, and that made the Arthurian Romances a fresh subject of interest to educated men.

"But M. Paulin Paris, whose opinions, founded upon a wide acquaintance with the contents of old manuscripts I am now sketching, and in part adopting, looked upon Walter Map as the soul of this work of Christian spiritualisation. Was the romance of St. Graal Latin before it was French? He does not doubt that it was. He sees in it

the mysticism of the subtlest theologian. It was not a knight or a jongleur who was so well read in the apocryphal gospels, the legends of the first Christian centuries, rabbinical fancies, and old Greek mythology; and there is all this in the St. Graal. There is a theory, too, of the sacrifice of the mass, an explanation of the Saviour's presence in the Eucharist, that is the work, he says, of the loftiest and the most brilliant imagination. These were not matters that a knight of the twelfth century would dare to touch. They came from an ecclesiastic and a man of genius. But if so, why should we refuse credit to the assertion, repeated in every manuscript that they were first written in Latin? The earliest manuscripts are of a date not long subsequent to the death of Walter Map, Latinist, theologian, wit, and chaplain to King Henry II, who himself took the liveliest interest in Breton legends. King Henry, M. Paris supposes, wished them to be collected, but how? Some would prefer one method, some another; Map reconciled all. He satisfied the clergy, pleased the scholar, filled the chasms in the popular tales, reconciled contradictions, or rejected inconsistencies, and by him also the introductory tale of the Graal was first written in Latin for Robert de Borron to translate into French."

The best literary appreciation of Map's genius, apart, of course, from the fact that all generations ever since have acknowledged the supreme human interest and eminently sympathetic quality of his work, is perhaps to be found in certain remarks of the modern critics who have made special studies in these earlier literary periods. Professor George Saintsbury, of the University of Edin-

burgh, for instance, in the second volume of "Periods of English Literature"* has been quite unstinted in his praise of this early English writer. He has not hesitated even to say in a striking passage that Map, or at least the original author of the Lancelot story, was one of the greatest of literary men and deserves a place only next to Dante in this century so preciously full of artistic achievement.

"Whether it was Walter Map, or Chrestien de Troyes, or both, or neither to whom the glory of at once completing and exalting the story is due, I at least have no pretension to decide. Whoever did it, if he did it by himself, was a great man indeed—a man second only to Dante among the men of the Middle Age. Even if it was done by an irregular company of men, each patching and piecing the other's efforts, the result shows a marvelous 'wind of the spirit' abroad and blowing on that company."

Professor Saintsbury then proceeds to show how much even readers of Malory miss of the greatness and especially of the sympathetic humanity of the original poem, and in a further passage states his firm conviction that the man who created Lancelot was one of the greatest literary inventors and sympathetic geniuses of all times, and that his work is destined, because the wellsprings of its action are so deep down in the human heart, to be of interest to generations of men for as long as our present form of civilization lasts.

"Perhaps the great artistic stroke in the whole legend,

*"*The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory,*" by George Saintsbury, Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature in the University of Edinburgh, New York, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1897.

and one of the greatest in all literature, is the concoction of a hero who should be not only

'Like Paris handsome, and like Hector brave,'

but more heroic than Paris and more interesting than Hector—not only a 'greatest knight,' but at once the sinful lover of his queen and the champion who should himself all but achieve and in the person of his son actually achieve, the sacred adventure of the Holy Graal. If, as there seems no valid reason to disbelieve, the hitting upon this idea, and the invention or adoption of Lancelot to carry it out, be the work of Walter Mapes (or Map), then Walter Mapes is one of the great novelists of the world, and one of the greatest of them. If it was some unknown person (it could hardly be Chrestien, for in Chrestien's form the Graal interest belongs to Percevale, not to Lancelot or Galahad), then the same compliment must be paid to that person unknown. Meanwhile the conception and execution of Lancelot, to whomsoever they may be due, are things more happy. Entirely free from the faultlessness which is the curse of the classical hero; his unequaled valor not seldom rewarded only by reverses; his merits redeemed from mawkishness by his one great fault, yet including all virtues that are themselves most amiable, and deformed by no vice that is actually loathsome; the soul of goodness in him always warring with his human frailty—Sir Lancelot fully deserves the noble funeral eulogy pronounced over his grave, felt by all the elect to be, in both senses, one of the first of all extant pieces of perfect English prose."

To appreciate fully how much Walter Map accomplished by his series of stories with regard to King Ar-

thur's court, it should be remembered that poets and painters have in many generations ever since found subjects for their inspiration within the bounds of the work which he created. After all, the main interest of succeeding poets who have put the legends into later forms, has centered more in the depth of humanity that there is in the stories, than in the poetic details for which they themselves have been responsible. In succeeding generations poets have often felt that these stories were so beautiful that they deserved to be retold in terms readily comprehensible to their own generation. Hence Malory wrote his *Morte d'Arthur* for the fifteenth century, Spenser used certain portions of the old myths for the sixteenth, and Tennyson set himself once more to retell the "Idylls of the King" for the nineteenth century. Each of these was adding little but new literary form, to a work that genius had drawn from sources so close to the heart of human nature that the stories were always to remain of enduring interest.

For the treasure of poesy with which humanity was enriched when he conceived the idea of setting the old ballads of King Arthur into literary form, more must be considered as due to the literary original writer than to any of his great successors. This is precisely the merit of Walter Map. Of some of his less ambitious literary work we have many examples that show us how thoroughly interested he was in all the details of human existence, even the most trivial. He had his likes and dislikes, he seems to have had some disappointed ambition that made him rather bitter towards ecclesiastics, he seems to have had some unfortunate experiences, especially with the

Cistercians, though how much of this is assumed rather than genuine is hard to say at this late date.

Just how these legends and stories gathered around the name of Arthur is not clear. Historically he is a British ruler who was really scarcely more than the chieftain of a tribe in the sixth century. He fought many battles and was finally killed on the field of Camlan in Cornwall. According to the most authentic story, Arthur and his treacherous nephew, Modred, who was also a knight of the Round Table, fell in single combat. Arthur was buried in Glastonbury. He is a character of history but his actual deeds furnish very little foundation for the cycle of romances to which his name is attached and all sorts of stories that were told before and after his time of various personages have been referred to him.

The origin of the romances is attributed to Wales or Brittany with certain Irish claims that are very interesting. Geoffrey of Monmouth, the historian, is usually thought to be the source of the legend. He collected or invented a series of these tales that gave chivalric interest to his material and the legends came into existence in that way. Henry Morley, as we have seen, was very much inclined to accept the idea that the earliest of these were written by Walter Map.

The binding element in the romances is the quest for the Holy Grail. The most ancient romance of "The Saint Graal" that is extant is in the French Bibliotheque Nationale (National Library) in Paris. It is a thirteenth century parchment folio that is extremely beautiful. Manifestly the makers of it thought that no amount of

time or labor or patience was too much to give to this story and it is full of precious ornaments of miniatures, vignettes and initials. The prelude to it serves to show the spirit of devout piety and self-abnegation with which the men of the Middle Ages approached the task of writing out the adventurous story of the search for the chalice or vessel in which Christ, the Saviour himself, had turned wine into His precious blood. This chalice, or Graal, was supposed to have been carried by Joseph of Arimathea into the distant west of Europe and then to have been spirited away lest it should be desecrated by paynim or sacrilegious hands. That prelude is itself a precious document:

PRELUDE OF THE ROMANCE OF THE ST. GRAAL

He who accounts himself the least and the most sinful of all, salutes, and begins this history to all those whose heart and faith is in the Holy Trinity. The name of him who wrote this history is not told at the beginning. But by the words that follow you may in a great measure perceive his name, country, and a great part of his lineage. But he would not disclose himself at the beginning. And he has three reasons for that. The first is that if he named himself, and said that God had revealed through him so high a history, the felon and envious would turn it into scoff. The second is that all who knew him, if they heard his name, would value the less his history, for being written by so mean a person. The third reason is, that if he put his name to the history, and any fault were found committed by him, or by a transcriber from one book into another, all the blame would fall on his name; for there are so many more mouths that speak evil than good, and a man gets more blame for a single fault than praise for a hundred merits. And however, he might wish to cover it, it would be more seen than he should like. But he will tell quite openly how the History of the Saint Graal was commanded to him to be made manifest.

The "Arthur Legends" have been the subject of so much attention and the material of them has been used so effectively by Thomas Malory, Edmund Spenser and, in the last generation, by Tennyson, that no further reference to them seems needed in this volume. They represent a most attractive subject that deserves to be studied faithfully for they have been a high inspiration to the making of poetry and of literature ever since they were first evolved. They still continue to be a favorite source for poetic efforts of many kinds in our day.

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BRÜNNHILDE

CHAPTER IV

The "Nibelungenlied"

FROM England and the Legends of King Arthur, the transition to Germany and the Teutonic hero stories is comparatively easy. Exactly contemporaneous with the presentation of the "Arthur Legends" in England at that standard of literary excellence which was to give them enduring poetic value, there came a corresponding definite arrangement and literary transformation of the old ballads of the German people into the form in which they were to exert a lasting influence on the German language and national feeling. The "Nibelungenlied," that is the Middle High German epic, received its present form from an unknown author early in the thirteenth century in south Germany. The title of the poem signifies the lay or song of the Nibelungs. The original Nibelungs were a race of northern dwarfs who derived their names from that of their king, Nibelung. The name came to be applied, however, to the followers of the hero Siegfried, who were the conquerors of the Nibelungs and who carried off their treasure. Most of the "lays" were undoubtedly finished not long after the famous contest of the Meistersingers on the Wartburg in 1206, which has been the frequent subject of song and story ever since.

For the "Nibelungenlied," as for the other great literary arrangements of folk ballads, there has been question as to the singleness of authorship. Here, however, as with

regard to "Homer" and "The Cid," the trend of modern criticism has all been towards the attribution of the poem to one writer. The internal evidence of similarity of expression constantly maintained, a certain simplicity of feeling and naïveté of repetition seems to leave no doubt in the matter.

As regards the merits of the "Nibelungenlied" as a great work of literature, there has been very little doubt in the English speaking world at least, because of the enthusiastic recognition accorded it by German critics and the influence of German criticism in all branches of literature over the whole Teutonic race during the nineteenth century. English admiration for the poem began after Carlyle's introduction of it to the English reading public in his essays. Since this time it has come to be very well known and yet, notwithstanding all that has been said about it, no English critic has expressed more fully the place of the great German poem in world literature, than did this enthusiastic pro-German of the first half of the nineteenth century.

For those for whom Carlyle's essays are a sealed book, because of the loss of interest in him with the passage of time, the citation of some of his appreciative critical expressions may be necessary:

"Here in the old Frankish (Oberdeutsch) dialect of the 'Nibelungen,' we have a clear decisive utterance, and in a real system of verse, not without essential regularity, great liveliness and now and then even harmony of rhythm. Doubtless we must often call it a diffuse diluted utterance; at the same time it is genuine, with a certain antique garrulous heartiness, and has a rhythm in the

thoughts as well as the words. . . . Indeed a strange charm lies in those old tones, where, in gay dancing melodies, the sternest tidings are sung to us; and deep floods of sadness and strife play lightly in little purling billows, like seas in summer. It is as a meek smile, in whose still, thoughtful depths a whole infinitude of patience and love and heroic strength lie revealed. But in other cases, too, we have seen this outward sport and inward earnestness offer grateful contrasts and cunning excitement; for example, in Tasso, of whom, though otherwise different enough, this old Northern Singer has more than once reminded us. There too, as here, we have a dark solemn meaning in light guise; deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death, stand embodied in that soft, quick-flowing joyfully-modulated verse. Nay farther, as if the implement, much more than we might fancy, had influenced the work done, these two poems, could we trust our individual feeling, have in one respect the same poetical result for us; in the 'Nibelungen' as in the 'Gerusalemme,' the persons and their story are indeed brought vividly before us, yet not near and palpably present; it is rather as if we looked on that scene through an inverted telescope, whereby the whole was carried far away into the distance, the life-large figures compressed into brilliant miniatures, so clear, so real, yet tiny, elf-like and beautiful as well as lessened, their colors being now closer and brighter, the shadows and trivial features no longer visible. This, as we partly apprehend, comes of singing epic poems; most part of which only pretend to be sung. Tasso's rich melody still lives among the Ital-

ian people; the 'Nibelungen' also is what it professes to be, a song."

The story of the "Nibelungen" would ordinarily be supposed to be so distant from the interests of modern life, as scarcely to hold the attention of a reader unless he were interested in it from a scholarly or more or less antiquarian standpoint. For those who think thus, however, there is only one thing that will correct such a false impression and that is to read the "Nibelungen" itself. It has a depth of simplicity and a sympathetic human interest all its own but that reminds one more of "Homer" than of anything else in literature, and "Homer" has faults but lack of interest is not one of them. From the very beginning the story of the young man who does not think he will marry, and whose mother does not think that anyone is good enough for him, and of the young woman who is sure that no one will come that will attract enough of her attention to compel her to subject herself to the yoke of marriage, are types of what is so permanent in humanity, that the reader's attention is at once caught. After this, the fighting parts of the story become the center of interest and hold the attention in spite of the refining influences that later centuries are supposed to have brought to humanity.

Hence it is that Professor Saintsbury in the second volume of his "Periods of European Literature," is able to say much about the modern interest in the story: "There may be," as he says, "too many episodic personages—Deitrich of Bern, for instance, has extremely little to do in this galley. But the strength, thoroughness and in its own savage way, charm of Kriemhild's character,

and the incomparable series of battles between the Burgundian princes and Etzel's men in the later cantos—cantos which contain the very best poetical fighting in the history of the world—far more than redeem this. The 'Nibelungenlied' is a very great poem; and with 'Beowulf' (the oldest but the least interesting on the whole), 'Roland' (the most artistically finished in form), and the poem of 'The Cid' (the cheerfullest and perhaps the fullest of character), composes a quartette of epics with which the literary story of the great European literary nations most appropriately begins. In bulk, dramatic completeness, and a certain furia, the 'Nibelungenlied,' though the youngest and probably the least original, is the greatest of the four."

Less need be said of the "Nibelungen" than of "The Cid" or Walter Map's work because it is more familiar, and even ordinary readers of literature have been brought more closely in touch with it because of its relation to the Wagnerian operas, though that is distant enough. Even those who know the fine old German poems only passingly, will yet realize the genius of their author and those who need to have the opinions of distinguished critics to back them before they form an estimate for themselves, will not need to seek far in our modern literature to find lofty praises of the old German epic.

The "Nibelungenlied" begins with a simplicity that would seem to promise little for interest, and yet there are elements at once introduced that inevitably attract the attention of the reader. First there is the maiden so fair to see that she could not fairer be, and the promise of the tragedy that always attends on beauty, for through

her in dismal strife many a warrior will lose his life. There are three brave brothers to guard her and a mother who is able to interpret her dream and inevitably interprets it as an indication that a mate is to come for the fair one. The first adventure closes on the note of the fulfilment of that dream and what it is to cost in life and suffering to those around her.

The version from which the quotations are taken was published in Edinburgh in 1814 and its author is not known for sure. Lockhart in his biography of Sir Walter Scott states that he has no doubt but that the rhymed version came from that poet's pen although of this there is no more direct proof. Here is the first adventure:

KRIEMHILD'S DREAM

In stories of our fathers high marvels we are told
Of champions well approved in perils manifold.
Of feasts and merry meetings, of weeping and of wail,
And deeds of gallant daring I'll tell you in my tale.

In Burgundy there flourish'd a maid so fair to see,
That in all the world together a fairer could not be.
This maiden's name was Kriemhild; through her in dismal strife
Full many a prowest warrior thereafter lost his life.

Many a fearless champion, as such well became,
Woo'd the lovely lady; she from none had blame.
Matchless was her person, matchless was her mind.
This one maiden's virtue grac'd all womankind.

Three puissant Kings her guarded with all the care they might,
Gunther and eke Gernot, each a redoubted knight,
And Giselher the youthful, a chosen champion he;
This lady was their sister, well lov'd of all the three.

They were high of lineage, thereto mild of mood,
But in field and foray champions fierce and rude.
They rul'd a mighty kingdom, Burgundy by name;
They wrought in Etzel's country deeds of deathless fame.

At Worms was their proud dwelling, the fair Rhine flowing by,
There had they suit and service from haughtiest chivalry,
For broad lands and lordships, and glorious was their state,
Till wretchedly they perish'd by two noble ladies' hate.

Dame Uta was their mother, a queen both rich and sage;
Their father hight Dancrat, who the fair heritage
Left to his noble children when he his course had run;
He too by deeds of knighthood in youth had worship won.

Each of these three princes, as you have heard me say,
Were men of mighty puissance. They had beneath their sway
The noblest knights for liegemen that ever dwelt on ground;
For hardihood and prowess were none so high renown'd.

There was Hagan of Trony of a noble line,
His brother nimble Dankwart, and the knight of Metz, Ortwine,
Eckewart and Garty, the margraves stout in fight,
Folker of Alzeia, full of manly might.

Rumolt the steward (a chosen knight was he),
Sindolt, and Humolt; these serv'd the brethren three,
At their court discharging their several duties well;
Besides, knights had they many whom now I cannot tell.

Dankwart was marshal to the king his lord,
Ortwine of Metz, his nephew, was carver at the board,
Sindolt, he was butler, a champion choice and true,
The chamberlain was Humolt; they well their duties knew.

The gorgeous pomp and splendor, wherein these brethren
reign'd,
How well they tended knighthood, what worship they attain'd,
How they thro' life were merry, and mock'd at woe and bale—
Who'd seek all this to tell you, would never end his tale.

A dream was dreamt by Kriemhild the virtuous and the gay,
How a wild young falcon she train'd for many a day,
Till two fierce eagles tore it; to her there could not be
In all the world such sorrow at this perforce to see.

To her mother Uta at once the dream she told,
But she the threatening future could only thus unfold;
"The falcon that thou trainedst is sure a noble mate;
God shield him in his mercy, or thou must lose him straight."

"A mate for me? what say'st thou, dearest mother mine?
Ne'er to love, assure thee, my heart will I resign.
I'll live and die a maiden, and end as I began,
Nor (let what else befall me) will suffer woe for man."

"Nay," said her anxious mother, "renounce not marriage so;
Woulds't thou true heartfelt pleasure taste ever here below,
Man's love alone can give it. Thou'rt fair as eye can see,
A fitting mate God send thee, and naught will wanting be."

"No more," the maiden answer'd, "no more, dear mother, say,
From many a woman's fortune this truth is clear as day,
That falsely smiling Pleasure with Pain requites us ever.
I from both will keep me, and thus will sorrow never."

So in her lofty virtues, fancy-free and gay,
Liv'd the noble maiden many a happy day,
Nor one more than another found favor in her sight;
Still at the last she wedded a far-renowned knight.

He was the self-same falcon she in her dream had seen,
Foretold by her wise mother. What vengeance took the queen
On her nearest kinsmen who him to death had done!
That single death atoning died many a mother's son.

Having thus been introduced to the heroine and her baleful beauty and the dream that foreshadowed misfortune to so many, the next step is to be introduced to the

hero and in the second adventure we have the description of him:

OF SIEGFRIED

In Netherland then flourish'd a prince of lofty kind,
(Whose father was called Siegmund, his mother Siegelind)
In a sumptuous castle down by the Rhine's fair side;
Men did call it Xanten; 't was famous far and wide.

I tell you of this warrior, how fair he was to see;
From shame and from dishonor liv'd he ever free.
Forthwith fierce and famous wax'd the mighty man.
Ah! what height of worship in this world he wan!

Siegfried men did call him, that same champion good;
Many a kingdom sought he in his manly mood,
And through strength of body in many a land rode he.
Ah! what men of valor he found in Burgundy!

Before this noble champion grew up to man's estate,
His hand had mighty wonders achiev'd in war's debate,
Whereof the voice of rumor will ever sing and say,
Though much must pass in silence in this our later day.

In his freshest season, in his youthful days,
One might full many a marvel tell in Siegfried's praise,
What lofty honors grac'd him, and how fair his fame,
How he charm'd to love him many a noble dame.

As did well befit him, he was bred with care,
And his own lofty nature gave him virtues rare,
From him his father's country grace and honor drew,
To see him prov'd in all things so noble and so true.

He now, grown up to youthhood, at court his duty paid;
The people saw him gladly; many a wife and many a maid
Wish'd he would often thither, and bide forever there;
They view'd him all with favor, whereof he well was ware.

The child by his fond parents was deck'd with weeds of
pride,
And but with guards about him they seldom let him ride.
Uptrain'd was he by sages, who what was honor knew,
So might he win full lightly broad lands and liegemen too.

Now had he strength and stature that weapons well he bore;
Whatever thereto needed, he had of it full store.
He began fair ladies to his love to woo,
And they inclin'd to Siegfried with faith and honor true.

Then bade his father Siegmund all his liegemen tell,
With his dear friends to revel it would please him well.
Where other kings were dwelling the tidings took their
course.
To friends and eke to strangers he gave both weed and horse.

Whosoe'er was worthy to become a knight
For his lofty lineage, did they each invite,
High-born youths and valiant to the feastful board;
With the young king Siegfried took they then the sword.

Of that proud feast royal wonders one might say;
King Siegmund and Queen Siegelind well might that day
Win honor for the bounty they shower'd with lavish hand,
For which full many a stranger came flocking through their
land.

Sworded squires four hundred rich raiment had to wear
With the noble Siegfried. Full many a maiden fair
Ceaseless plied the needle to please the warrior bold;
Precious stones unnumber'd the women set in gold,

(For gold was there in plenty), and as each could best
For the love of Siegfried they work'd the jewel'd vest.
The Host rais'd seats unnumber'd for many a martial wight
On the fair midsummer when his heir was dubb'd a knight.

Forthwith to the high minister flock'd many a squire along,
And many a knight of worship. To fitly train the young

The old should lend that service which once to them was lent,
They pass'd the hours in pastime and gentle merriment.

But first to God's due honor a holy mass they sung,
And then a press and struggle arose the crowd among,
And then with pomp befitting each youth was dubb'd a knight.
In sooth, before was never seen so fair a sight.

All ran at once, where saddled many a war-horse stood.
In the court of Siegmund the tourney was so rude,
That both hall and palace echoed far around,
As those high-mettled champions shock'd with thundering sound.

Old and young together fiercely hurtling flew,
That the shiver'd lances swept the welkin through;
Splinters e'en to the palace went whizzing many a one
From hands of mighty champions; all there was deftly done.

The Host bade cease the tourney; the steeds were led away;
Then might you see, all shatter'd how many a shield there lay,
And store of stones full precious from bucklers beaming sheen
In those fierce shocks were scatter'd upon the trampled green.

Thence went the guests in order, and sat around the board;
Many dainty dishes their wearied strength restor'd,
And wine, of all the richest, their burning thirst allay'd:
To friends alike and strangers was fitting honor pay'd.

Albeit in ceaseless pastime they spent the livelong day,
The mummers and the minstrels never ceas'd their play.
They flock'd to golden largess, a roving frolic band,
And pour'd a flood of praises on Siegmund's fertile land.

The king, too, as his father to him before had done,
Enfeoff'd with lands and castles Siegfried his youthful son;
Gifts to his sword-companions he gave with liberal hand,
So glad was he, it pleased them to come into his land.

The gorgeous feast it lasted till the seventh day was o'er;
Siegelind the wealthy did as they did of yore;
She won for valiant Siegfried the hearts of young and old,
When for his sake among them she shower'd the ruddy gold.

You scarce could find one needy in all the minstrel band;
Horses and robes were scatter'd with ever open hand.
They gave as though they had not another day to live,
None were to take so ready, as they inclin'd to give.

So was dissolv'd with honor the mighty festival:
The high-descended Barons assembled there in hall,
That youth were well contented as lord to serve and sue,
But that desir'd not Siegfried, the champion stout and true.

While Siegelind and Siegmund yet liv'd and flourished there,
Full little reck'd their offspring the royal crown to wear.
He only would be master and exercise command,
'Gainst those whose pride o'erweening disturb'd the peaceful land.

None ventur'd to defy him; since weapons first he took,
The bed of sloth but seldom the noble knight could brook.
He only sought for battles; his prowess-gifted hand
Won him renown eternal in every foreign strand.

After these descriptions of the heroine and hero, the next most interesting event in the story of the "Nibelungenlied" is the meeting between these protagonists of the action. This is told after Siegfried has had some adventures that enable the reader to appreciate his character as a warrior in the third and fourth adventure, while the fifth adventure is concerned with:

HOW SIEGFRIED FIRST SAW KRIEMHILD

Now might you ever daily see riding toward the Rhine
Troops of good knights ambitious at that proud feast to shine.
Whoe'er for love of Gunther to Gunther's court would speed,
Was at his hands provided with vesture and with steed.

Assign'd were seats befitting to every high-born guest.
Thither, as has been told us, the noblest and the best
Came two and thirty princes to that high festal tide.
In gawds and gems the women each with her neighbor vied.

Now here, now there was busy the youthful Giselher;
He and his brother Gernot each with his meiny there
Right hospitable welcome to friend and stranger made,
And every fitting honor to every warrior paid.

Full many a gold-red saddle, full many a sparkling shield,
With store of sumptuous vesture for that high festal field,
Were then convey'd to Rhineland; many an ailing wight
Grew merry again and gladsome to see so fair a sight.

Each, who in bed lay wounded, though like to yield his breath,
Could now no more remember the bitterness of death.
By the sick the healthy could now no longer stay;
Comrade laugh'd with comrade against the festal day.

On the good entertainment prepar'd for young and old;
Measureless contentment, enjoyment manifold
Enliven'd all the people, and spread from band to band.
The note of pleasure echoed through all King Gunther's land.

'Twas on a Whitsun' morning the warriors you might see,
Five thousand men or better, fair pricking o'er the lea,
Yclad in courtly raiment, to that high festival,
In jollity and pastime were vying one and all.

Right well had mark'd King Gunther, who love could understand,

What heartfelt love impassion'd the knight of Netherland,
E'en though he ne'er had seen her, his peerless sister bare,
The maid proclaim'd by all men the fairest of the fair.

Said he, "Now all advise me, kinsmen and men of mine,
How best of this high tourney to perfect the design,
So that our earnest efforts henceforth none may blame.
'Tis but on deeds deserving that rests enduring fame."

He scarce had thus address'd them, when answer'd bold Ortwine,
"Would you, O King! full honor to this high feast assign,
Bring forth our choicest treasures to this proud chivalry,
The matrons and the maidens of our fair Burgundy.

"What more the heart enraptures, or courage more inflames
Than to look on lovely damsels, on high and stately dames?
Bid too come forth your sister to feast each stranger's sight."
Well was approv'd the counsel by each surrounding knight.

"'Tis well advis'd," said Gunther, "I straight will do my part."
Whoever heard his answer was inly glad at heart.
Then bade he Lady Uta and her fair daughter call
To grace the court and tourney, them and their maidens all.

In haste through all the presses for rich attire they sought,
What lay in wrappers folded alike to light was brought,
Bracelets and clasps and brooches all ready forth were laid,
Soon deck'd in all her choicest was every noble maid.

Many a young knight that morning, within his flutt'ring breast,
Long'd, that on him, contented, bright beauty's glance might rest;
Such glance he would not barter for all a king can own.
Each look'd on each full gladly, albeit before unknown.

Then bade the wealthy monarch with royal pomp and state
Of his men a hundred on his sister wait,

His and the maiden's kinsmen; each carried sword in hand,
These were the chosen courtiers of Burgundy's fair land.

With her the wealthy Uta there coming too was seen;
She had with her in waiting of fair and stately mien,
A hundred dames or better, all gorgeously array'd,
Her daughter, too, was followed by many a noble maid.

On from her bower advancing they came in fair array;
Much press was there of heroes along the crowded way.
Through anxious glad expectance to see that beauty rare,
The fairest and the noblest of the noble and the fair.

Now went she forth, the loveliest, as forth the morning goes,
From misty clouds out-beaming; then all his weary woes
Left him, in heart who bore her, and so, long time, had done.
He saw there stately standing the fair, the peerless one.

Many a stone full precious flash'd from her vesture bright;
Her rosy blushes darted a softer, milder light.
Whate'er might be his wishes, each could not but confess,
He ne'er on earth had witness'd such perfect loveliness.

As the moon arising outglitters every star
That through the clouds so purely glimmers from afar,
E'en so love-breathing Kriemhild dimm'd every beauty nigh.
Well might at such a vision many a bold heart beat high.

Rich chamberlains before them march'd on in order due;
Around th' high-mettled champions close and closer drew,
Each pressing each, and struggling to see the matchless maid.
Then inly was Sir Siegfried both well and ill apaid.

Within himself thus thought he: "How could I thus misdeem
That I should dare to woo thee? sure 'twas an idle dream!
Yet rather than forsake thee, far better were I dead."
Thus thinking, thus impassion'd, wax'd he ever white and red.

So stood the son of Siegelind in matchless grace array'd,
As though upon a parchment in glowing hues portray'd

By some good master's cunning; all own'd, and could no less,
Eye had not seen a pattern of such fair manliness.

Those, who the dames attended, bade all around make way;
Straight did the gentle warriors, as such became, obey.
There many a knight, enraptur'd, saw many a dame in place
Shine forth in bright perfection of courtliness and grace.

Then the bold Burgundian, Sir Gernot, spoke his thought,
"Him, who in hour of peril his aid so frankly brought,
Requite, dear brother Gunther, as fits both him and you,
Before this fair assembly; th' advice I give, I ne'er shall rue.

"Bid Siegfried come to Kriemhild; let each the other meet;
'Twill sure be to our profit, if she the warrior greet.
'Twill make him ours forever, this man of matchless might,
If she but give him greeting, who never greeted knight."

Then went King Gunther's kinsmen, a high-born haughty band,
And found, and fair saulted the knight of Netherland.
"The king to court invites you; such favor have you won;
His sister there will greet you; this to honor you is done."

Glad man was then Sir Siegfried as this unlook'd-for gain;
His heart was full of pleasure without alloy of pain,
To see and meet so friendly fair Uta's fairer child.
Then greeted she the warrior maidenly and mild.

There stood he, the high-minded, beneath her star-bright eye,
His cheek as fire all glowing; then said she modestly,
"Sir Siegfried, you are welcome, noble knight and good!"
Yet loftier at that greeting rose his lofty mood.

He bow'd with soft emotion, and thank'd the blushing fair;
Love's strong constraint together impell'd th' enamour'd pair;
Their longing eyes encounter'd, their glances, every one,
Bound knight and maid for ever, yet all by stealth was done.

That in the warmth of passion he press'd her lily hand,
I do not know for certain, but well can understand.
'Twere surely past believing they ventur'd not on this;
Two loving hearts, so meeting, else had done amiss.

No more in pride of summer nor in bloom of May
Knew he such heart-felt pleasure as on this happy day,
When she, than May more blooming, more bright than
summer's pride,
His own, a dream no longer, was standing by his side.

Then thought full many a champion, "Would this had
happ'd to me
To be with lovely Kriemhild as Siegfried now I see,
Or closer e'en than Siegfried; well were I then, I ween."
Never yet was champion, who so deserv'd a queen.

The thirty-ninth adventure is concerned with how Gunther and Hagan and Kriemhild were slain. The poet of the "Nibelungen" thoroughly believed in the beneficent influence of tragedy on the human soul and had no cult of the happy ending. Siegfried is dead and with these the secret of the Nibelung's treasure is lost forever. It dies with them but it brought nothing but evil with it. Kriemhild had had her brother's life taken in his dungeon and bore his head by the hair to the lord of Trony. None but God and he know where the treasure is now, he says, and he shall never tell it to her. Her reply was in deed rather than in word but first she said:

. . . "Ill hast thou quitted a debt so deadly scored;
At least in my possession I'll keep my Siegfried's sword,
My lord and lover bore it, when last I saw him go.
For him woe wrung my bosom, that pass'd all other woe."

Forth from the sheath she drew it; that could not he
prevent;

At once to slay the champion was Kriemhild's stern intent.
High with both hands she heav'd it, and off his head did
smite
That was seen of King Etzel; he shudder'd at the sight.

"Ah!" cried the prince impassion'd, "Harrow and wellaway!
That the hand of a woman the noblest knight should slay,
That e'er struck stroke in battle, or ever buckler bore!
Albeit I was his foeman, needs must I sorrow sore."

Then said the aged Hildebrand, "Let not her boast of gain,
In that by her contrivance this noble chief was slain.
Though to sore strait he brought me, let ruin on me light,
But I will take full vengeance for Trony's murdered knight."

Hildebrand, the aged, fierce on Kriemhild sprung;
To the death he smote her as his sword he swung.
Sudden and remorseless he his wrath did wreak.
What could then avail her, her fearful thrilling shriek?

There now the dreary corpses stretch'd all around were seen;
There lay, hewn in pieces, the fair and noble queen.
Sir Dietrich and King Etzel, their tears began to start;
For kinsmen and for vassals each sorrow'd in his heart.

The mighty and the noble there lay together dead;
For this had all the people dole and drearihead.
The feast of royal Etzel was thus shut up in woe.
Pain in the steps of Pleasure treads ever here below.

'Tis more than I can tell you what afterward befell,
Save that there was weeping for friends belov'd so well;
Knights and squires, dames and damsels, were seen
lamenting all.
So here I end my story. This is THE NIBELUNGERS'
FALL.

York Minster (West Front)

CHAPTER V

The Origin of Rhyme in Poetry

THE first examples of rhymed poetry are found on Celtic soil and among Celtic nations. Distinguished European philologists have insisted that we are forced to the conclusion that the Celtic poets, through their development of assonance, became the inventors of rhyme. Zeuss, the distinguished German scholar, whose knowledge of linguistics and special studies in Gaelic and other ancient literatures give him a right to an opinion in this matter, says:

"The form of Celtic poetry, to judge both from the older and the more recent examples adduced, appears to be more ornate than the poetic form of any other nation, and even more ornate in the older poems than in the modern ones; from this greater ornateness undoubtedly it came to pass that at the very time the Roman Empire was hastening to ruin, the Celtic forms—at first entire, afterwards in part—passed over not only into the songs of the Latin, but also into those of other nations and remained in them."

Douglas Hyde in his "Literary History of Ireland" says that it is:

"A tremendous claim to make for the Celt that he taught Europe to rhyme; it is a claim in comparison with which if it could be substantiated everything else that he has done in literature pales into insignificance. Yet it has been made for him by some of the foremost European

scholars. The great Zeuss himself is emphatic on this point."

Mr. Hyde discusses other authorities for and against the claim that the world owes rhyme to the Irish, and the only conclusion that can possibly be reached is that if the Irish are not wholly responsible for the movement that led to rhyme, they did so much more than any other nation for it, that it is perfectly clear that the world's debt to them in the matter is so much larger than to any other as to be supreme. Hyde quotes Constantine Negra in his edition of the "Glosses in the Codex Taurinensis" as declaring, "final assonance or rhyme can have been derived only from the laws of the Celtic phonology."

This is not surprising once we realize that the Irish devotion to music made them the inventors of more melodies than any other nation. This outspoken tendency toward musical expression was readily carried over into literature so that the music of verse came into existence. The first complete use of rhyme in Irish poetry comes in the Christian hymns, so many of which were written by the Irish in the intense enthusiasm of their religious feelings in the early days of Christianity when their fervor was yet fresh upon them. Some of these hymns are attributed to certain great saints without much reason for it; but others are probably correctly attributed, for the spell of poetry as well as of religion was over the land and on the lips of the early saints.

What is probably the earliest Christian hymn written in Gaelic is attributed to St. Patrick himself. It is known as "The Deer's Cry," and was written in the fifth century. Dr. Sigerson translated the hymn in the same

measure, meter and rhythm of the original, and this will give the modern student of the subject some idea of the perfection of rhyme in poetry among the Irish at this time:

I BIND ME TODAY

I

God's might to direct me,
God's power to protect me,
God's wisdom for learning,
God's eye for discerning,
God's ear for my hearing,
God's word for my clearing.

II

God's hand for my cover,
God's path to pass over,
God's buckler to guard me,
God's army to ward me,
Against snares of the devil,
Against vice's temptation,
Against wrong inclination,
Against men who plot evil,
Anear or afar, with many or few.

III

Christ near,
Christ here,
Christ be with me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ be o'er me,
Christ before me.

IV

Christ in the left and the right,
Christ hither and thither,

Christ in the sight,
Of each eye that shall seek me,
In each ear that shall hear me,
In each mouth that shall speak me—
Christ not the less
In each heart I address.
I bind me today on the Triune—I call,
With faith in the Trinity—Unity—God over all.

Among the Irish, these rhymed hymns in Irish were written not only by the men but also by the women. Perhaps the best known of the hymns by Irish women poets is that of St. Ita, a companion of St. Bridget, with regard to the Christ Child. The affectionate name used in Irish for the Child Jesus is the diminutive that may be translated into English, "Jesukin." The hymn is said to have been written as the result of a vision at the Christmas time of the Christ Child who came to share the solitude of the poet saint on His birthnight. It has translated into the original meter and rhyme scheme by Dr. Sigerson in his "Bards of the Gael and the Gaul":

JESUKIN (LITTLE JESUS)

Jesukin
Lives my little cell within,
What were wealth of riches here,
All is lie but Jesukin.

Nursling nourished as 'tis right,
Harbors here no servile spright,
Jesu of the skies Who art
Next my heart through every night.

Jesukin my good for aye,
Calling and will not have nay,
King of all things ever true,
He shall rue who will away.

Jesu more than angels' aid,
Fosterling not formed to fade,
Nursed by me in desert wild,
Jesu, Child of Juda's maid.

Sons of kings and kingly kin,
To my land may enter in,
Guest of none I hope to be
Save of Thee, my Jesukin.

Unto Heaven's high king confessed,
Sing a chorus maidens blessed,
He is over us though within,
Jesukin is on my breast.

There was a tendency among the Irish, even as early as the fifth century, to write rhymed poetry on religious subjects though not in the form of hymns. One of these poems, attributed to St. Bridget, is the story of a blind member of her community to whom Bridget by a miracle had restored her sight. After enjoying the pleasures of vision for a very short time, the old sister asked that she should be "darkened," because she found so much of distraction in the sights around her that she could not give that attention to the things of the other world and the presence of God near her that was so readily possible before in her sightless condition. Katherine Tynan Hinkson on the basis of the old Gaelic poem has retold the incident in verse very like the original:

Yet she said, my sister
Blind me once again,
Lest His presence in me
Groweth less plain.
Stars and dawn and sunset
Keep till Paradise,

Here His face sufficeth
For my sightless eyes.

Oh, she said, my sister,
Night is beautiful
Where His face is showing
Who was mocked as fool.
More than star or meteor,
More than moon or sun,
Is the thorn-crowned forehead
Of the Holy One.

One of the oldest, perhaps the oldest, of the Latin hymns in which rhyme was employed to give music to the verses, is that of Sedulius. He was an Irish priest, whose Latin name, Sedulius, was a translation of Shiel or Shealy, who lived most of his life in Italy. He wrote Latin hymns using many rhymes in them. His principal work was the "Carmen Pascale," the first portion of which is on the Nativity. The rhymes are still imperfect and yet there is a marvelous music in the verses:

A solis ortus cardine
Ad usque terrae limitem
Christum canamus principem,
Natum Maria virgine.

Beatus auctor saeculi
Servile corpus induit,
Ut carne carnem liberans
Ne perderet quos condidit.

Castae parentis viscera
Coelestis intrat gratia:
Venter puellae baiulat
Secreta, quae non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris
Templum repente fit Dei:
Intacta, nesciens virum
Verbo, concepit filium.

Enixa iam puerpera est,
Quem Gabriel praedixerat,
Quem matris alvo gestiens
Clausus Ioannes senserat.

Foeno iacere pertulit,
Praesepe non abhorruit,
Parvoque lacte pastus est,
Per quem nec ales esurit.

Gaudet chorus coelestium
Et angeli canunt Deo,
Palamque fit pastoribus
Pastor, creator omnium.

The best known translation of this hymn is the one to be found in the "Primer" of 1706 and which is usually attributed to John Dryden. When he became a convert to the Church, the great English poet, the author of the wonderful lyric poem, "St. Cecilia's Day," devoted a good deal of his time to creating a Catholic literature in English. He translated the lives of St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius and he did a number of other translations. His conversion cost him not a little in misunderstanding as well as in a financial way and his devotion to the cause of the Church is very interesting. Almost needless to say, the translation of Sedulius' hymn is a masterpiece of English verse:

From every part o'er which the sun
Does in its rolling compass run,
May creatures all conspire to sing

The praises of our new-born king.
  The God of nature, for our sake,
Our servile nature chose to take;
With flesh to lend our flesh his aid,
And save the works his hand had made.
In Mary's womb he takes his place,
And there erects his seat of grace;
In silence she adored and blest
The sacred mystery in her breast.
  Her virgin-womb, that chaste abode,
Becomes the temple of her God;
And she, of nature's works alone
Above nature's laws, conceives a son.

Thus does the bearing Maid unfold
The mystery Gabriel foretold;
Which John within his mother's womb
Foresaw, and blest the Lamb to come.
  Behold him in the manger laid,
A sheaf of straw his royal bed;
And he whose bounty feeds the rest,
Lies craving at his Mother's breast.

Here angels to their maker sing;
Here heaven's loud choirs with echoes ring;
Whilst shepherds here adore, and know
Their pastor and creator too.
  May age to age for ever sing
The Virgin's Son and angel's king;
And praise with the celestial host
The Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Another one of these early medieval Latin hymns that is looked upon as a triumph among the early contributions to great literature in connection with the Church services, is the well known hymn *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*. This is said to have been written by Fortunatus at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.

It shows the influence of Sedulius and the Celtic tendency to the use of assonance, that is the recurrence of the same vowel sounds though here and there there is also a similar consonant sound which represents the fulness of rhyme. Fortunatus was driven from Italy by the invasion of the Lombards and was induced by Queen Radegunda of Gaul to settle at Poitiers. Here he became so prominent a personage because of his scholarship and his writing for the Church that he was chosen as bishop. The first three stanzas give an excellent idea of the hymn and at the same time indicate that the complete development of rhyme is not far ahead:

Vexilla Regis prodeunt,
Fulget crucis mysterium,
Quo carne carnis conditor
Suspensus est patibulo;

Quo vulneratus insuper
Mucrone diro lanceae,
Ut nos lavaret crimine
Manavit unda et sanguine.

Impleta sunt, quae concinit
David fideli carmine,
Dicendo nationibus:
Regnavit a ligno Deus!

The translation by Prior Aylward conveys very charmingly both the rhythm and the meaning of the original, and brings out the simplicity and yet the distinction of the short lines and brief stanzas:

Behold, the royal banners fly,
Now shines the awful mystery
Of the dread cross, whereon in death
Incarnate God resigned his breath.

While from his deeply wounded side,
Pierced with the cruel lance, a tide
Of mingled blood and water ran
To cleanse the stains of guilty man.

Then was fulfilled the faithful song
Chaunted of old by David's tongue,
"Lo, from the tree our God commands,
And reigns a king o'er all the lands."

O glorious tree, all decked with light,
And with the royal purple bright,
Thy branches bear a blessed load,
The price that ransomed us to God.

Blest are thine arms, for what they bear—
Our forfeit nature's ransom dear—
Thou balance which his love weighed down,
To claim what hell had made its own.

Dear cross, best hope o'er all beside,
That cheers the solemn passion-tide,
Give to the just increase of grace,
Give to each contrite sinner peace.

To thee, O Trinity, be given
All the high songs of earth and heaven,
And rule us thou who savest us,
Through the sweet mystery of the cross.

After Sedulius and Fortunatus, the full perfection of rhyme was not far away, and it was to be developed in complete fashion in the median centuries of the Middle Ages and prove the vehicle for some of the greatest poems ever written. What modern poetry would be without rhyme we can see readily from recent experiments in free verse. The difference we owe to the Middle Ages as much as we owe Gothic architecture.

CHAPTER VI

Great Latin Hymns

THE most precious literary bequest of the Middle Ages to humanity is undoubtedly the great Latin hymns. These sublime, religious poems, comparable only to the Hebrew psalms for their sublime expression of the awe and devotion of deepest religious feelings, present what is practically the beginning of rhymed poetry, yet they have been acclaimed by competent modern critics, among them some of our greatest poets, as probably the sublimest poetry that ever came from the mind of man.

These Latin hymns have sometimes been spoken of with a certain contempt as, "rhymed Latin poetry," as if the use of rhyme in conjunction with Latin somehow lowered the dignity of the grand old tongue in which Cicero wrote, and Horace sang his tuneful odes. But far from detracting from the beauties of Latin poetic expression, these hymns have added new laurels to the glory of the language and have shown the marvelous possibilities of the Roman speech in the mouths of generations long after the classical period. If they served no other purpose than to demonstrate beyond cavil how profoundly the scholars of this generation succeeded in making themselves masters of the genius of the Latin language, that alone would serve to contradict the flippant critics who talk of the education of the period as superficial or as

negligent of everything but Scholastic philosophy and theology.

At least one distinguished philologist, Professor F. A. March, who for a half century occupied the chair of comparative philology at Lafayette College, did not hesitate to say that the Latin hymns represent an expression of the genius of the Latin language more characteristic than the classical poetry of either the golden or silver ages at Rome. He said: "These hymns were the first original poetry in the Latin language, unless perhaps those Latin critics may be right who think they find in Livy a prose rendering of earlier ballads. The so-called classic poetry was an echo of Greece, both in substance and in form. The matter and meters were both imitated and the poems were composed for the lovers of Grecian art in the Roman Court. It did not spring from the people, but the Christian hymns were proper folk poetry, the Bible of the people—their Homeric poems. Their making was not so much speech as action. They were in substance, festive prayers, the simplest rhythmic offering of thanks and praise to the Giver of Light and of rest both natural and spiritual, at morning and evening and at other seasons, suited to the remembrance and rhythmical rehearsal of the truths of the Bible."

Professor March's opinion has been echoed by many another enthusiastic student of these wonderful hymns. It is only those who do not know them who fail to grow enthusiastic about them.

This of itself would stamp these great poems as worthy of careful study. There is, however, an additional reason for modern interest in them. These hymns were sung by

the whole congregation at certain of the many services that they attended in the medieval period. In this regard it seems well to recall that it was the custom to go to church much oftener then, than at present. Besides the Sundays, there were many holy days of obligation; that is, religious festivals on which attendance at church was obligatory, and in addition a certain number of days of devotion on which, because of special reverence for some particular saint, or in celebration of some event in the life of the Lord or His saints, the people of special parts of the country found themselves drawn to attendance on church services. It seems probable that instead of the sixty or so times a year that is now obligatory, people went to church during the Middle Ages more than a hundred times in the year. Very often there was the uplifting cultural influence of congregational singing of wonderful hymns that are among the greatest poems ever written and that belong to literature of the very highest order. The educational value of such intimate contact with what is best in literary expression could scarcely fail to have a distinct cultural effect upon the people. It is idle to say that the hymns being in Latin they were not understood, since the language of them was closely akin to the spoken tongues, the subjects were eminently familiar mysteries of religion, and constant repetition and frequent explanation must have led to a very general comprehension even by the least educated classes. For anyone with any pretension to education they must have been easy to understand, since Latin was practically a universal language.

It is not always realized by the students whose inter-

ests have been mainly confined to modern literature, in what estimation these Latin hymns have been held by those who are in the best position to be able to judge critically of their value as poetry. Take for example the *Dies Iræ,* confessedly the greatest of them, and it will be found that many of the great poets and literary men of the nineteenth century have counted it among their favorite poems. Such men as Goethe, Friedrich and August Schlegel, Scott, Milman and Archbishop Trench were enthusiastic in its praise; while such geniuses as Dryden, Johnson and Jeremy Taylor, and the musicians Mozart and Hayden, avowed supreme admiration for it. Herder, Fichte and August Schlegel besides Crashaw, Drummond, Roscommon, Trench and Macaulay gave the proof of their appreciation of the hymn by devoting themselves to making translations of it, and Goethe's use of it in *Faust* and Scott's in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," show how much poets, whose sympathies were not involved in its religious aspects, were caught by its literary and æsthetic merit.

In very recent times the Latin hymns have been coming more to their own again and such distinguished critics as Professor Henry Morley and Professor George Saintsbury, have not hesitated to express their critical appreciation of these hymns as great literature. Professor Saintsbury says in his volume "The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory" (Vol. II of "Periods of European Literature," New York, Scribners, 1899):

"It will be more convenient to postpone to a later chapter of this volume a consideration of the exact way in which Latin sacred poetry affected the prosody of the

vernacular; but it is well here to point out that almost all of the finest and most famous examples of the medieval hymns, date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Ours (that is, from this period) are the stately rhythms of Adam of St. Victor, and the softer ones of St. Bernard the Greater. It was at this time that Jacopone da Todi, in the intervals of his eccentric vernacular exercises, was inspired to write the *Stabat Mater*. From this time comes that glorious descant of Bernard of Morlaix, in which, the more its famous and very elegant English paraphrase is read beside it (Jerusalem the Golden), the more does the greatness and the beauty of the original appear.

"And from this time comes the greatest of all hymns, and one of the greatest of all poems, the *Dies Iræ*. There have been attempts—more than one of them—to make out that the *Dies Iræ* is no such wonderful thing after all; attempts which are, perhaps, the extreme examples of that cheap and despicable paradox which thinks to escape the charge of blind docility by the affectation of heterodox independence. The judgment of the greatest (and not always of the most pious) men of letters of modern times may confirm those who are uncomfortable without authority in a different opinion. Fortunately there is not likely ever to be lack of those who, authority or no authority, in youth and in age, after much reading or without much, in all time of their tribulation and in all time of their wealth, will hold these wonderful triplets, be they Thomas of Celano's or another's, as nearly or quite the most perfect wedding of sound to sense that they know."

This seems almost the limit of praise but Professor Saintsbury can say even more than this: "It would be possible, indeed, to illustrate a complete dissertation on the methods of expression in serious poetry from the fifty-one lines of the *Dies Iræ*. Rhyme, alliteration, cadence, and adjustment of vowel and consonant values—all these things receive perfect expression in it, or, at least, in the first thirteen stanzas, for the last four are a little inferior. It is quite astonishing to reflect upon the careful art or the felicitous accident of such a line as:

Tuba mirum spargens sonum

with the thud of the trochee falling in each instance in a different vowel; and still more on the continuous sequence of five stanzas, from *Judex ergo* to *non sit cassus,* in which not a word could be displaced or replaced by another without loss. The climax of verbal harmony, corresponding to and expressing religious passion and religious awe, is reached in the last—

Quaerens me sedisti lassus,
Redemisti crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus!

where the sudden change from the dominant *e* sounds (except in the rhyme foot) of the first two lines to the *a*'s of the last is simply miraculous and miraculously assisted by what may be called the internal sub-rhyme of *sedisti* and *redemisti.* This latter effect can rarely be attempted without a jingle: there is no jingle here, only an ineffable melody. After the *Dies Iræ,* no poet could say that any effect of poetry was, as far as sound goes, unattainable,

though few could have hoped to equal it, and perhaps no one except Dante and Shakespeare has fully done so."

Higher praise than this could scarcely be given and it comes from an acknowledged authority, whose interests are, moreover, in secular rather than religious literature, and whose enthusiastic praise is therefore all the more striking. Here in America, Schaff, whose critical judgment in religious literature is unquestionable, and whose sympathies with the old Church and her hymns were not as deep as if he had been a Roman Catholic, has been quite as unstinted in laudation:

"This marvelous hymn is the acknowledged masterpiece of Latin poetry, and the most sublime of all uninspired hymns. . . . The secret of its irresistible power lies in the awful grandeur of the theme, the intense earnestness and pathos of the poet, the simple majesty and solemn music of its language, the stately meter, the triple rhyme, and the vowel assonances, chosen in striking adaptation to the sense—all combining to produce an overwhelming effect, as if we heard the final crash of the universe, the commotion of the opening graves, the trumpet of the archangel summoning the quick and the dead, and saw the 'king of tremendous majesty' seated on the throne of justice and of mercy, and ready to dispense everlasting life and everlasting woe."

Neale says of Thomas Aquinas' great hymn, the *Pange Lingua:* "This hymn contests the second place among those of the Western Church with the *Vexilla Regis,* the *Stabat Mater,* the *Jesu Dulcis Memoria,* the *Ad Regias Agni Dapes,* the *Ad Supernam* and one or two others, leaving the *Dies Iræ* in its unapproachable glory," thus

furnishing another precious testimony to the hymn we have been discussing, which indeed only needs to be read to be appreciated, since it will inevitably tempt to successive readings and these bring with them ever and ever increasing admiration, showing in this more than in any other way that it is a work of sublime genius.

The *Dies Iræ* was eminently dear to Sir Walter Scott. One incident reveals that better than anything else that could be said. In the last days of the life of the author of Waverly, when all of his great mind had failed or was failing, he was yet heard to murmur to himself some lines of this hymn, an especial favorite with him in other days. Sir Walter used it in one of his poems very much as Goethe used it in *Faust*.

Trench has said that it is not hard to account for its wide and general popularity. There are a series of qualities which account for this: "The meter so grandly devised of which I remember no other example fitted though it has here shown itself for bringing out some of the noblest powers of the Latin language; the solemn effort of the triple rhyme which has been likened to blow following blow of the hammer on the anvil; the confidence of the poet in the universal interest of his theme, a confidence which has made him set out his matter with so majestic and unadorned a plainness as at once to be intelligible to all—these merits with many more have given the *Dies Iræ* a foremost place among the masterpieces of song."

Since this hymn has been selected by critics and by great poets as one of the greatest poems on a religious subject ever written, and as Professor Saintsbury said—

the most wonderful wedding of sense and sound that the world has ever known—the whole Latin text and a fitting translation of it must be presented here. So many distinguished people have proclaimed it supreme in its presentation of the greatest theme that man can think of,—the end of the world, or the end of all things for the particular individual,—the text should be familiar to all those who look for culture through contact with what is best rather than merely information about things in general:

Dies irae, dies illa!
Solvet saeclum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulcra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.

Mors stupebit, et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Iudicanti responsura.

Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus iudicetur.

Iudex ergo cum censebit,
Quidquid latet, apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.

Quid sum, miser! tunc dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix iustus sit securus?

Rex tremendae maiestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis!

Recordare, Iesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae;
Ne me perdas illa die!

Quaerens me, sedisti lassus,
Redemisti, crucem passus:
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Iustae iudex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis
Ante diem rationis.

Ingemisco tanquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus;
Supplicanti parce, Deus!

Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
Sed Tu bonus fac benigne
Ne perenni cremer igne!

Inter oves locum praesta,
Et ab haedis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.

Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis!

Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis,
Gere curam mei finis.

Lacrimosa dies illa!
Qua resurget ex favilla,
Iudicandus homo reus;

Huic ergo parce, Deus!

There are so many translations (nearly a thousand of them have been published) that it is difficult to choose the one that would best represent the majesty and dignity of the Latin. Perhaps the version made by Justice O'Hagan of Dublin will reasonably fulfill that purpose:

Day of wrath, that day whose knelling
Gives to flame this earthly dwelling;
Psalm and Sibyl thus foretelling.

Oh, what agony of trembling,
When the judge mankind assembling,
Probeth all beyond dissembling.

Pealing wondrous through the regions,
Shall the trumpet force obedience,
And the graves yield up their legions.

Startled death and nature sicken,
Thus to see the creature quicken,
Waiting judgment terror-stricken.

Open, then, with all recorded,
Stands the book from whence awarded
Doom shall pass with deed accorded.

When the judge is throned in session,
All things hid shall find confession,
Unavenged be no transgression.

Wretch, what then shall be my pleading?
Who my patron interceding?
Scarce the just securely speeding.

Thou, O king of awful splendour,
Saving grace dost freely render;
Save me, fount of pity tender.

Think, 'twas I, my lost condition,
Caused, O pitying Lord, thy mission;
Spare my soul that day's perdition.

Seeking me, thy footstep hasted;
Me to save, the cross was tasted;
Be not toil so mighty wasted.

Righteous judge of retribution,
Grant the gift of absolution
Ere the day of restitution.

Me my culprit heart accuses;
Inmost guilt my face suffuses;
Heal, O Lord, thy suppliant's bruises.

Thou who Mary's sin hast shriven,
Thou who broughtst the thief to heaven,
Hope to me hast also given.

Nothing worth is mine endeavour,
Yet, in ruth, my soul deliver
From the flame that burns for ever.

With thy sheep, thy chosen, place me,
Severed from the goats embrace me;
On thy right-hand, ransomed, place me.

When the reprobate confounded
Lie with wrathful fire surrounded,
May my call to bliss be sounded.

Crushed to dust and prostrate bending,
All my heart contrition rending;
I implore thee, guard my ending.

Oh, that awful day of mourning,
When, from earthly dust returning,

Guilty man shall bide his sentence;
Spare him, God, for his repentance.

Jesus, Lord, thy mercy lending,
Grant them rest, thy rest unending.

The successive steps in the development of Latin hymnody are very interesting. They all come during the medieval period.

Pope St. Gregory the Great in the sixth century wrote a series of hymns that are still used in the Breviary, or office that is said by priests every day, as well as in some of the Church services. Gregory rearranged the ritual of the Church and selected and distributed the music to be used in Church services so that this has ever since been called Gregorian. While he does not write in formal rhyme, there is a music to his verse that makes it very satisfying to the ear. Cardinal Newman translated some of his hymns for the Breviary. Here, for instance, is Newman's translation of St. Gregory's *Lucis Creator Optime:*

Father of lights, by whom each day
  Is kindled out of night,
Who, when the heavens were made, didst lay
  Their rudiments in light;

Thou, who didst bind and blend in one
  The glistening morn and evening pale,
Hear thou our plaint, when light is gone,
  And lawlessness and strife prevail.

Hear, lest the whelming weight of crime
  Wreck us with life in view;

Lest thoughts and schemes of sense and time
Earn us a sinner's due;

So may we knock at heaven's door,
And strive the immortal prize to win,
Continually and evermore
Guarded without and pure within.

Grant this, O Father, only Son
And Spirit, God of grace,
To whom all worship shall be done
In every time and place.

That was the Vesper hymn and it is really the climax of the Breviary hymns of the day. Many of those who have to read them frequently declare, however, that the hymns for Matins and Lauds and Prime are fully equal to it. Newman's translation has given them a very worthy setting in English that has all the simplicity of the original and follows the music of the verse very closely:

MATINS

Nocte surgentes

Let us arise, and watch by night
And meditate always;
And chant, as in our maker's sight,
United hymns of praise.

So, singing with the saints in bliss,
With them we may attain
Life everlasting after this,
And heaven for earthly pain.

Grant it to us, O Father, Son
And Spirit, God of grace,
To whom all worship shall be done
In every time and place.

LAUDS

Ecce jam noctis

Paler have grown the shades of night,
And nearer draws the day,
Checkering the sky with streaks of light,
Since we began to pray:

To pray for mercy when we sin,
For cleansing and release,
For ghostly safety, and within
For everlasting peace.

Praise to the Father, as is meet,
Praise to the only Son,
Praise to the holy Paraclete,
While endless ages run.

PRIME

Jam lucis orto sidere

The star of morn to night succeeds;
We therefore meekly pray,
May God, in all our words and deeds,
Keep us from harm this day;
May he in love restrain us still
From tones of strife and words of ill,
And wrap around and close our eyes
To earth's absorbing vanities.

May wrath, and thoughts that gender shame
Ne'er in our breasts abide;
And cheerful abstinences tame
Of wanton flesh the pride;
So, when the weary day is o'er,
And night and stillness come once more,
Strong in self-conquering purity,
We may proclaim, with choirs on high;

Praise to the Father, as is meet,
Praise to the only Son,
Praise to the Holy Paraclete,
While endless ages run.

The *Veni Sancte Spiritus* is declared by Trench to be "the loveliest of all the hymns in the whole circle of Latin sacred poetry." Clichtoveus declares that "It is beyond all praise as well on account of its remarkable grace and ease as of the richness and fulness of its thoughts. The finished beauty of its construction seems to show that its author was filled by the Holy Spirit with a heavenly sweetness which enabled him to pour forth such delightful thoughts in such comprehensive and appropriate language."

No wonder, then, that it has been attributed to a series of distinguished authors though unfortunately there is not sufficient evidence for us to be sure that any of them really wrote the marvelous hymn. Among others, the authorship has been assigned to Pope Innocent III, who is considered the greatest of the medieval popes, though there have been claimants also for its authorship for Hermanus Contractus, a learned monk of the monastery of St. Gall which had been founded by the Irish monks and which was deeply influenced by the Irish tradition of musical verse that led to the invention of rhyme. The hymn is now commonly attributed, however, to Robert II, King of France. He bears the designation "Pious" and was the son of Hugh Capet whom he succeeded on the throne just at the turn of the millennium in 996.

One of the greatest of the medieval hymnodists was Adam of St. Victor who, according to the old chroniclers,

was born in Britannia but whether they meant that Latin word to refer to what we call Britain or to Bretagne, that is Brittany in France across the Channel, cannot be determined at the present time. He was Brother Adam of the great Abbey of St. Victor near Paris where he lived for many years and died sometime toward the end of the twelfth century. There are others, notably Richard of St. Victor, who bear a similar name. The abbey was one of the most celebrated religious houses in France seven hundred years ago, famous for its learning, its theology, its cult of mystical devotion, and its fondness for sacred lyrics. Adam was held in high esteem as a devout and learned man. His familiarity with the sacred Scriptures was most remarkable and evidently could only have come as the result of the most constant reading and the most careful study and comparison of the sacred writings. Holy Writ seemed to be almost the only language that he knew, so easily and gracefully did it flow from his pen in the harmonious lines of his lyrical compositions of which 106 are extant. He died July 8, 1177, and his epitaph, written by himself, is one of the best known of his poems. Archbishop Trench, the Anglican archbishop of Dublin, an authority on medieval hymnody, said of him:

"His profound acquaintance with the whole circle of the theology of his time, and eminently with its exposition of Scripture; the abundant and admirable use, with indeed the drawback already mentioned (too free and curious use), which he makes of it, delivering, as he thus does, his poems from the merely *subjective* cast of those, beautiful as they are, of St. Bernard; the exquisite art

and variety with which for the most part his verse is managed and his rhymes disposed; their rich melody, multiplying and ever deepening at the close; the strength which he often concentrates into a single line; his skill in conducting a story; and, most of all, the evident nearness of the things which he celebrates to his own heart of hearts—all these and other excellences render him, as far as my judgment goes, the foremost among the sacred Latin poets of the Middle Ages."

Neale thinks, "*if this estimate have a fault,* it hardly does this wonderful poet justice." Rambach calls him "the Schiller of the Middle Ages."

Very probably the best illustration of Adam's skill in versification, above all in the music of his verse and his simplicity of style, is his hymn on the feast of Pentecost or Hymn to the Holy Ghost. The first three stanzas of the Latin give an excellent idea of the whole hymn and also of Adam's style:

HYMNUS IN FESTE PENTECOSTES

Qui procedis ab utroque,
Genitore Genitoque
  Pariter, Paraclite!
Redde linguas eloquentes,
Fac ferventes in te mentes
  Flamma tua divite.

Amor Patris Filiique,
Par amborum, et utrique
  Compar et consimilis:
Cuncta reples, cuncta foves,
Astra regis, coelum moves,
  Permanens immobilis.

Lumen clarum, lumen carum,
Internarum tenebrarum
  Effugas caliginem.
Per te mundi sunt mundati;
Tu peccatum et peccati
  Destruis rubiginem.

One of the most charming hymns of the Middle Ages is that of Bernard of Clairvaux on "The Name of Jesus." St. Bernard was probably the man of widest and deepest influence in his time. His preaching had such an effect on men's minds that he was called Doctor Mellifluus. This hymn has been described as the sweetest of all the hymns of the Middle Ages. There is a translation of the Breviary version of it which is found in the "Primer" of 1706 and is usually said to have been done by Dryden:

Jesus, the very thought of thee
  With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter still it is to see,
  And on thy beauty feast.
No theme so soft, nor sound so gay
  Can art of music frame;
No words, nor even thought can say,
  Thy most mellifluous name.

Sole hope, when we our sins repent,
  So bounteous of thy grace;
If thus thou'rt good while we lament,
  Oh, what when face to face?
Jesus, that name inspires my mind
  With springs of life and light;
More than I ask in thee I find,
  And lavish in delight.

No eloquence, nor art can reach
  The joys of those above;

The blest can only know, not reach
What they in Jesus prove.
Thee then I'll seek retired apart,
From world and business free;
When noise invades I'll shut my heart,
And keep it all for thee.

An early pilgrim thus I'll come,
With Magdalen, to find
In sighs and tears my Saviour's tomb,
And there refresh my mind.
My tears upon his grave shall flow,
My sighs the garden fill;
Then at his feet myself I'll throw,
And there I'll seek his will.

Jesus, in my blest steps I'll tread,
And haunt thee through thy ways;
I'll mourn, and never cease to plead
'Till I'm restored to grace.
Great conqueror of death, thy fire
Does such sweet flames excite,
That first it raises the desire,
Then fills it with delight.

Thy quickening presence shines so clear
Through every sense and way,
That souls, who once have seen thee near,
See all things else decay.
Come then, dear Lord, possess my heart,
And chase the shades of night;
Come, pierce it with thy flaming dart,
And ever-shining light.

Then, I'll forever Jesus sing,
And with the blest rejoice;
Then all the vaulted towers shall ring,

And echoing hearts and voices sing,
And still repeat, "Rejoice."*

An excellent example of the rhymed Latin poetry of the later Middle Ages is found in the well-known poem, *De contemptu mundi,* usually attributed to Bernard of Cluny. He was a monk at Cluny but he was born at Morlais in Brittany of English parents and is chiefly known as the author of this poem. Some of it is written in Latin hexameters, regularly divided into three parts, the first two of which have double rhymes with each other while the concluding words rhyme in the same way in pairs of lines. It must have required a miracle of patience to write it, so great are the difficulties of the rhyme scheme. The author himself was inclined to think he was able to accomplish his purpose only by special help from on High. Altogether there are some three thousand lines and most of these are a bitter satire on the corruption of the age. Bernard was an old man finding fault with his contemporaries and especially with the succeeding generation as so many old men do. His satire reveals the fact that things were not very different in those days from what they were long afterwards in our own time, but also they

*The original Latin of this hymn with its four dissyllabic rhymes in each stanza is one of the most musical in the whole range of medieval hymnody. The first three stanzas will illustrate this:

DE NOMINE IESU

Iesu dulcis memoria
Dans vera cordis gaudia,
Sed super mel et omnia
Eius dulcis praesentia.

Nil canitur suavius,
Auditur nil iucundius,
Nil cogitatur dulcius,
Quam Iesus, Dei filius.

Iesu, spes poenitentibus,
Quam pius et petentibus,
Quam bonus te quaerentibus,
Sed quid invenientibus?

reveal that men have always had about the same complaints of human nature and the way that it was getting on in the world.

Fortunately Bernard joined his rather ruthlessly satirical hymn with the description of the heavenly land to which he was looking forward and this has been the source of a series of beautiful hymns in the modern time on the heavenly Jerusalem. Schaff in his "Christ in Song," borrowed three hymns from Bernard of Morlais. He says: "This glowing description is the sweetest of all the New Jerusalem hymns, of heavenly homesickness, which have taken their inspiration from the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation." Dr. Neale, another of our American collectors of hymns, says that Bernard of Morlais' poem, or at least the introduction of it is, "The most lovely in the same way that the *Dies Iræ* is the most sublime and the *Stabat Mater* the most pathetic of medieval poems."*

*Here are a dozen of lines from Bernard's great poem that will give some idea of the difficulty of the meter that is selected:

Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus,
Ecce minaciter imminet arbiter ille supremus
Imminet, imminet ut mala terminet, aequa coronet,
Recta remuneret, anxia liberet, aethera donet,
Auferat aspera duraque pondera mentis onustae,
Sobria muniat, improba puniat, utraque juste.

Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur, hic breve fletur;
Non breve vivere, non breve plangere retribuetur;
O retributio! stat brevis actio, vita perennis;
O retributio! coelica mansio stat lue plenis;
Quid datur et quibus? aether egentibus et cruce dignis,
Sidera vermibus, optima sontibus, astra malignis.

There are many versions, but few translators have dared to attempt a close imitation of the original meter. Its beauty is so great, however, that even the labor required for this has not deterred some enthusiastic admirers. Our English tongue, however, does not lend itself readily to the production of hexameters, still less to internal rhymes in them, though in these lines the rhyme and the rhythm have been caught to an appreciable extent:

"These are the latter times, these are not better times;
Let us stand waiting;
Lo! how with, awfulness, He, first in lawfulness,
Comes arbitrating."

Scarcely less great as literature than the *Dies Iræ,* almost more interesting because of the pathetic sympathy aroused by its subject, is the famous *Stabat Mater* of Jacopone da Todi. Certainly no more marvelously poetic expression of all that is saddest in human sorrow has ever been put into words than that which is to be found in these stanzas of the Franciscan friar who had himself, as we shall see, known all the depths of human sorrow and trial. Most people know the opening stanzas of it well enough so that their presentation seems almost superfluous, and yet it is from the poem itself and not from any critical appreciation of it that its greatness must be judged. Here are the first three stanzas:

Stabat mater dolorosa
Iuxta crucem lacrimosa,
  Dum pendebat filius,
Cuius animam gementem,
Contristantem et dolentem
  Pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
  Mater unigeniti,
Quae maerebat et dolebat
Et tremebat, dum videbat
  Nati poenas incliti.

Quis est homo, qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
  In tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari,
Piam matrem contemplari
  Dolentem cum filio?

As in the case of the *Dies Iræ* there have been many

translations of the *Stabat Mater,* most of them done by poets whose hearts were in their work and who were accomplishing their purpose as labors of love. While we realize how many beautiful translations there are, it is almost pitiful to think what poor English versions are sometimes used in the devotional exercises of the present day. One of the most beautiful translations is undoubtedly that by Denis Florence MacCarthy, who has been hailed as probably the best translator into English of foreign poetry that our generation has known, and whose translations of Calderon present the greatest of Spanish poets, in a dress as worthy of the original as it is possible for a poet to have in a foreign tongue. MacCarthy has succeeded in following the intricate rhyme plan of the *Stabat* with a perfection that would be deemed almost impossible in our harsher English, which does not readily yield itself to double rhymes and which permits frequency of rhyme as a rule only at the sacrifice of vigor of expression. The first three stanzas, however, of the *Stabat Mater* will serve to show how well MacCarthy accomplished his difficult task:

By the Cross, on which suspended,
With his bleeding hands extended,
  Hung that Son she so adored,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
She whose heart, its silence keeping,
  Grief had cleft as with a sword.

O, that Mother's sad affliction—
Mother of all benediction—
  Of the sole-begotten One;
Oh, the grieving, sense-bereaving,
Of her heaving breast, perceiving
  The dread sufferings of her Son.

What man is there so unfeeling,
Who, his heart to pity steeling,
  Could behold that sight unmoved?
Could Christ's Mother see there weeping,
See the pious Mother keeping
  Vigil by the Son she loved?

A very beautiful translation in the meter of the original was also made by the distinguished Irish poet, Aubrey de Vere. The last two stanzas of this translation have been considered as perhaps the most charmingly effective equivalent in English for Jacopone's wonderfully devotional termination that has even been written:

May his wounds both wound and heal me;
His blood enkindle, cleanse anneal me;
  Be his cross my hope and stay:
Virgin, when the mountains quiver,
From that flame which burns for ever,
  Shield me on the judgment-day.

Christ, when he that shaped me calls me,
When advancing death appalls me.
  Through her prayer the storm make calm:
When to dust my dust returneth
Save a soul to thee that yearneth;
  Grant it thou the crown and palm.

Erastus C. Benedict in his little volume, "The Hymn of Hildebert and Other Medieval Hymns," says of the *Stabat Mater:*

"The most striking poetical situation in sacred history is the Mother of Jesus at the Cross. It could not fail to be the subject of a medieval hymn."

Dr. Schaff in his volume "Hours at Home" can scarcely say too much in praise of the hymn:

"The mysterious charm and power of the hymn is due to the subject, and to the intensity of feeling with which the author has seized it. Mary stood there not only as the mother, but as the representative of the whole Christian Church, for which the eternal Son of God suffered the most ignominious death on the Cross. The author had the rare poetic faculty to bring out, as from immediate vision and heartfelt sympathy, the deep meaning of these scenes, in stanzas of classic beauty and melody that melt the heart and start the tear of penitential grief at the Cross of Christ.

"The *Mater Dolorosa* has been regarded by universal consent as the most pathetic and touching of Latin Church lyrics, and inferior only to the *Dies Iræ,* which stands alone in its glory and overpowering effect. Daniel calls it the queen of sequences. It breathes the spirit of profound repentance and glowing love, such as can be kindled only by long and intense contemplation of the mystery of the Cross—that most amazing and affecting spectacle ever presented to the gaze of heaven and earth. The agony of Mary at the Cross, and the sword which then pierced through her soul, according to the prophecy of Simeon, never found more perfect expression. It surpasses in effect the *Mater Dolorosas* of the greatest painters. The key-note of the hymn is contained in the first two lines, and is suggested by the brief but pregnant sentence of St. John, *Stabat juxta crucem mater ejus.* Vulg. It is brought out with overpowering effect in the hymn, as has been felt even by those who have little religious sympathy with the theme. 'The loveliness of sorrow,' says Tieck, 'in the depth of pain, the smiling in tears, the childlike

simplicity which touches on the highest heaven, had to me never before risen so bright in the soul. I had to turn away to hide my tears, especially at the place, *Vidit suum dulcem natum.'*

"The *Mater Dolorosa* has furnished the text of some of the noblest musical compositions by Palestrina, Pergolesi, Astorga, Haydn, Bellini, Rossini, Neukomm. That of Palestrina is still annually performed in the Sistine Chapel during Passion week."

In a certain way, the most interesting writer of hymns of the later Middle Ages is Thomas Aquinas, Doctor Angelicus, the Angelic Doctor, the master of all the Scholastic philosophers. We have from his pen a series of hymns on the Blessed Eucharist that are among the most beautiful examples of Christian hymnody. They include the *Adoro te devote latens Deitas,* the *Lauda sion salvatorem,* the *Verbum superbum prodiens* and the well-known *Pange lingua gloriosi,* the last two stanzas of which, beginning with *Tantum ergo Sacramentum,* have been perhaps more used in church services than any other with the possible exception of the *Dies Iræ.*

For Thomas as for many of the intellectual geniuses of the modern time, the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was one of the most wondrously satisfying mysteries of Christianity and the subject of special devotion. In our own time Cardinal Newman presented a striking exemplification of this same attitude of mind. When the feast of Corpus Christi, the special feast of the Holy Eucharist, was about to be proclaimed by the pope, Aquinas who had been very much interested in the proceedings leading up to the establishment of the feast, was asked by

the pope to write the office of the festival. There are always certain hymns incorporated in the offices of the different feast days. Ordinarily it would have been expected that a profound scholar and supreme philosopher such as Aquinas was, would write and select the prose portions of the office, leaving the hymns for some other hands or selecting hymns from older, sacred poetry. Thomas, however, wrote both hymns and prose, and surprising as it cannot but seem, his hymns are some of the most beautiful that have ever been composed and have evoked the highest admiration of recent generations particularly. The *Pange lingua gloriosi* is usually included among the seven greatest hymns of the Middle Ages. Here is Prior Aylward's translation of that hymn:

Sing, my joyful tongue, the mystery
  Of the glorious body slain,
And the blood all pure and precious
  Shed a lost world to regain,
By the king of nations, issuing
  From a womb that knew no stain.

Born unto us of a Virgin
  Purer than the purest snow,
And amongst mankind conversing
  Seeds of heavenly truth to sow,
He at length in wondrous order,
  Closed his sojourn here below.

Seated with his brethren round him
  On the night when last they met,
For the law's complete fulfilment,
  When the Lamb was duly ate,
Then before the twelve disciples
  For their food himself he set.

By a word the Word incarnate
Simple bread to flesh divine,
Simple wine to blood converteth;
But, if sense to doubt incline,
Under faith's sufficient teaching
Simple hearts all doubts resign.

(Tantum ergo)

Wherefore this dread Host adoring,
Let us bend with reverence due;
Let the ancient rite departing
Yield and fade before the new;
Faith alone the proof supplying
Which the senses fail to view.

Unto the Sire and Son eternal
Praise and jubilation sing;
Saving health, immortal honour,
Glory, might and blessing bring;
And the same unto the Spirit
Who from both doth equal spring.

The third of these great Latin hymns on the Blessed Sacrament from the pen of St. Thomas Aquinas is the *Verbum supernum prodiens,* the last two stanzas of which are the *O Salutaris Hostia,* which, like the *Tantum ergo,* are sung at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The translation of it here given is from the Primer, English collection of hymns, of 1706 and is usually considered to have been made by John Dryden:

The eternal God, by human birth,
Unchanged pursues his task on earth;
Concluding his laborious strife
With wonders at the close of life.
Betrayed to Jews, betrayed to death,
His own disciple grudged him breath;

Yet he for his disciples' food,
Himself, the bread of life, bestowed.

Beneath the types of wine and bread,
They on his blood and body fed;
That man, of two-fold substance made,
For each might find respective aid.
He's born, to make himself our mate;
He eats, to make himself our treat;
He dies, to lay our ransom down;
And reigns, to make himself our crown.

(O salutaris Hostia)

O saving Host, that heaven's high gate
Lay'st open at so dear a rate;
Intestine wars invade our breast,
Be thou our strength, support and rest.
May endless praise attend the throne
Of heaven's high ruler, Three and One;
And he on us those joys bestow
That neither end, nor measure know.

Comparisons are odious above all when there is question of such beautiful examples of Latin poetry as these great hymns, but there is a fourth hymn by Aquinas that is scarcely if any less charming than the others which are more familiar. This is the *Adoro te devote,* the translation of which by Justice O'Hagan has been greatly admired:

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas

Hidden God, devoutly I adore thee,
Truly present underneath these veils;
All my heart subdues itself before thee,
Since it all before thee faints and fails.

Not to sight, or taste, or touch be credit,
  Hearing only do we trust secure;
I believe, for God the Son hath said it—
  Word of truth that ever shall endure.

On the cross was veiled thy Godhead's splendour,
  Here thy manhood lieth hidden too;
Unto both alike my faith I render,
  And, as sued the contrite thief, I sue.

Though I look not on thy wounds, with Thomas,
  Thee, my Lord and thee, my God I call:
Make me more and more believe thy promise,
  Hope in thee, and love thee over all.

O memorial of my Saviour dying,
  Living bread, that givest life to man;
May my soul, its life from thee supplying
  Taste thy sweetness, as on earth it can.

Deign, O Jesus, pelican of heaven,
  Me, a sinner, in thy blood to lave,
To a single drop of which is given
  All the world from all its sin to save.

Contemplating, Lord, thy hidden presence,
  Grant me what I thirst for and implore,
In revelation of thine essence,
  To behold thy glory evermore.

Literally there are more than ten thousand of these medieval Latin hymns. There are at least a thousand of them that are genuine poetry. More than a hundred are supremely great poetry. I have called attention here to less than a score of the greatest but there is marvelous unanimity among those best qualified to judge as to the supreme poetic quality of these hymns. They have come down to us in constant service in the Church. The hymns

that were selected for use in Church ceremonials have continued ever since to be employed and they are the best possible testimony to the taste and critical judgment of the churchmen who chose them for use in the Church services. When it is realized the immense number they had to pick from and how infallibly their choice was made, the aspersion frequently heard as regards medieval scholars, that they were lacking in critical judgment proves to be an ignorant calumny of men of the most exquisite taste in poetry.

CHAPTER VII

Minnesingers, Meistersingers

THE literature of the later medieval period was not always serious in character or epical in form. They were happy people, as the adjectives which they chose to describe their national dispositions make very clear. There was Merrie England, Gay France, Germany the Gemüthlich, Happy Spain, Fortunate Italy. The soul of wit and humor informed the body social perhaps more completely than at any other time. Certainly the spirit of gaiety and light hearted admiration for Nature found as frequent and fervent expression as at any time. With these, as always in literary history, there came an outburst of love in lyric strains that were destined to be immortal.

While the poets of southern Germany and of Italy sang of love in strains that were as nearly sublime as can be, almost never mingled with anything of the merely sensual, their tuneful trifles are quite as satisfying to the modern mind in both sense and sound as any of the more elaborate *vers de société* of the modern times. The German poets, particularly, did not hesitate to emphasize the fact that sensuality had no part in Minne—their pretty term for love—and yet they sang with all the natural grace and fervid rapture of the Grecian poets of the old pagan times worshipping at the shrines of fleshly goddesses or singing to the frail beauties of an unmoral

period. Nothing in the history of literature is better proof that ideal love, unmixed with the sensual, can inspire lyric outbursts of supreme and enduring beauty than the poems of the Minnesingers and some of the French and Italian Troubadours of this time. Dante's beautiful poems, and especially his canzoniere, can be better understood and appreciated after reading the poems of his predecessors in this mode of literature.

For this feeling of the lofty character of the love they sang was not, in spite of what is sometimes said, confined only to the Germans, though as is well known from time immemorial the Teutonic feeling towards woman was by racial influence of higher character than that of the southern nations. As Mr. H. J. Chaytor says in the introduction to his "Troubadours of Dante," there came a gradual change over the mind of the Troubadour about the beginning of the thirteenth century and "seeing that love was the inspiring force to good deeds," the later Troubadours gradually dissociated their love from the object which had aroused it. Among them, "as among the Minnesingers, love is no longer sexual passion, it is rather the motive to great works, to self-surrender, to the winning an honorable name as courtier and poet." Mr Chaytor then quotes the well-known lines from Bernart de Ventadorn, one of the Troubadours to whom Dante refers, and whose works Dante seems to have read with special attention since their poems contain similar errors of mythology:

"for indeed I know
Of no more subtle passion under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,

Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought and amiable words,
And courtliness and the desire of fame,
And love of truth and all that makes a man."

A sentiment surely that will be considered as true now as it ever was, and that represents the best solution of social problems that has ever been put forward—nature's own panacea for ills that other remedies at best only palliate.

In the early nineteenth century Carlyle said of this period what we may well repeat here:

"We shall suppose that this Literary Period is partially known to all readers. Let each recall whatever he has learned or figures regarding it; represent to himself that brave young heyday of Chivalry and Minstrelsy when a stern Barbarossa, a stern Lion-heart, sang *sirventes,* and with the hand that could wield the sword and sceptre twanged the melodious strings; when knights-errant tilted, and ladies' eyes rained bright influences; and, suddenly, as at sunrise, the whole earth had grown vocal and musical. Then, truly, was the time of singing come; for princes and prelates, emperors and squires, the wise and the simple, men, women and children, all sang and rhymed or delighted in hearing it done. It was a universal noise of Song; as if the Spring of Manhood had arrived, and warblings from every spray, not, indeed, without infinite twitterings also, which except their gladness, had no music, were bidding it welcome."

This is the keynote of this period—song, blithesome and gay as the birds, solemn and harmonious as the organ

tones that accord so well with the great Latin hymns—everywhere song.

"Believers," says Tieck, the great collector of thirteenth century poetry, "sang of Faith; Lovers of Love; Knights described knightly actions and battles; and loving, believing knights were their chief audience. The Spring, Beauty, Gaiety, were objects that could never tire; great duels and deeds of arms carried away every hearer, the more surely the stronger they were painted; and as the pillars and dome of the Church encircled the flock, so did Religion, as the Highest, encircle Poetry and Reality; and every heart, in equal love, humbled itself before her."

The names of the Meistersingers are well known, to musical lovers at least, because of the music drama of that name and the famous war of the Wartburg. The most familiar of all of them is doubtless Walter von der Vogelweide, Walter-of-the-bird-meadows, who derives his name from the response he made when he was asked where he found the tuneful melodies of his songs,—that he learned them from the birds. Those who recall Longfellow's pretty ballad with regard to Walter and his leaving all his substance to feed the birds over his grave near Nuremberg's minster towers, will not find it surprising that this Meistersinger's poetry breathes the deepest love of Nature, and that there is in it a lyric quality of joy in the things of Nature that we are apt to think of as modern, until we find over and over again in these bards, that the spirit of the woods and of the fields and of the springtime, meant as much for them as for any follower of the Wordsworth school of poetry in the

more conscious aftertime. This from Walter with regard to the May and his Lady will serve to illustrate very well this phase of his work:

Gentle May, thou showerest fairly
  Gifts afar and near;
Clothest all the woods so rarely,
  And the meadows here;
O'er the heath new colors glow;
Flowers and clover on the plain,
Merry rivals, strive amain
Which can fastest grow.

Lady! part me from my sadness,
  Love me while 'tis May;
Mine is but a borrowed gladness
  If thou frown alway;
Look around and smile anew!
All the world is glad and free;
Let a little joy from thee
Fall to my lot too!

Walter could be on occasion, however, as serious as any of the Meistersingers and is especially known from his religious poems. It is not surprising that any one who set woman on so high a pedestal as did Walter, should have written beautiful poems to the Blessed Virgin. He was the first, so it is said, to express the sentiment: "Woman, God bless her, by that name, for it is a far nobler name than lady." Occasionally he can be seriously didactic and he has not hesitated even to express some sentiments with regard to methods of education. Among other things, he discusses the question as to whether children should be whipped or not, in the process of education, and curiously enough takes the very modern view that whipping

is always a mistake. In this, of course, he disagrees with all the practical educators of his time, who considered the rod the most effective instrument for the education of children and strictly followed the scriptural injunction about sparing the rod and spoiling the child. Walter's opinion is for that reason all the more interesting:

"Children with rod ruling—
'Tis the worst of schooling,
Who is honor made to know,
To him a word seems as a blow."

The birds were always a favorite subject for poetic inspiration on the part of the Minnesingers. Bird music rapt poetic souls into ecstasies in which the passage of time was utterly unnoticed. It is from the later Middle Ages that comes the beautiful legend with regard to the monk who, having wondered how time could be kept from dragging in Heaven, was permitted to listen to the song of a bird one day in the forest, and when he awoke from his rapture, and went back to his convent, found that a hundred years had passed, that all of the monks of his acquaintance were dead, and while his name was found on the rolls of the monastery, after it, there was a note that he had disappeared one day and had never been heard of afterwards. Almost in the same tenor as this, is a pretty song from Dietmar von Eist, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which was a type of the charming songs that were to be so characteristic of the times:

There sat upon the linden-tree
A bird, and sang its strain;
So sweet it sung that as I heard
My heart went back again.

It went to one remember'd spot,
  It saw the rose-tree grow,
And thought again the thoughts of love,
  There cherished long ago.

A thousand years to me it seems
  Since by my fair I sate;
Yet thus to be a stranger long
  Is not my choice, but fate;
Since then I have not seen the flowers,
  Nor heard the birds' sweet song;
My joys have all too briefly past,
  My griefs been all too long.

Hartman von Aue was a contemporary of Walter's and is best known for his romantic stories. It is rather curiously interesting to find that one of the old chroniclers considers it a great mark of distinction that, though Hartman was a knight, he was able to read and write whatever he found written in books. It must not be forgotten, however, that not all of these poets could read and write, and that, indeed, so distinguished a literary man as Wolfram von Eschenbach, the author of "Parzifal," the story on which Wagner founded his opera of *Parsifal,* could neither read nor write. He had developed a very wonderful memory and was able to store faithfully his poems in the course of their composition so that he was above the need of pen and paper. Hartman is most famous for having written the story of Poor Henry, which Longfellow has chosen so effectively for his "Golden Legend." Hartman's appreciation of women can be judged from his lines, which accord her an equal share

in her lord's glory in war because of her sufferings and prayer at home:

Glory be unto her whose word
Sends her dear lord to bitter fight;
Although he conquer by his sword,
She to the praise has equal right;
He with the sword in battle, she at home with prayer,
Both win the victory, and both the glory share.

Occasionally one finds, as we have said, among the little songs of the Minnesingers of the time such tuneful trifles as could be included very appropriately in a modern collection of *vers de société,* or as might even serve as a love message on a modern valentine.

The surprise of finding such things at such a time will justify the quotation of one of them from Brother Wernher, who owes his title of brother, not to his membership in any religious order, very probably, but to the fact that he belonged to the brotherhood of the poets of the time:

Since creation I was thine;
Now forever thou art mine.
I have shut thee fast
In my heart at last.
I have dropped the key
In an unknown sea.
Forever must thou my prisoner be!

Wolfram von Eschenbach was the chief of a group of poets who, at the close of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, gathered about the Landgraf Hermann of Thüringen in his court on the Wartburg, at

the foot of which lies Eisenach, in the present Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar. They shaped tales of knightly adventure, blended with reflection, spiritual suggestion, and a grace of verse that represented the best culture of the court, and did not address itself immediately to the people. Wolfram was a younger son of one of the lower noble Bavarian families settled at Eschenbach, nine miles from Ausbach, in Middle Franconia. He had a modest little home of his own, Wildenberg, but went abroad to seek adventures as a knight, and tell adventures as a poet. His presence was welcome to great lords, and most welcome to the lavish friend of poets, Hermann of Thüringen, at whose court on the Wartburg he remained twenty years, from 1195 to 1215, in which latter year his "Parzival" was finished. From some passages in his poem it may safely be inferred that he was happily married, and had children. The Landgraf Hermann died in 1216, and was succeeded by Ludwig, husband of St. Elizabeth, usually called of Hungary, from her nativity. She is said to have been a patroness of the poets and especially the hymnodists of her day.

We cannot ascribe to English writers alone the spiritualizing of the Grail Legends, when there is Wolfram's "Parzival" drawing from the same cycle of myths a noble poem of the striving to bind earthly knighthood to the ever living God. While Gawain type of the earthly knight wins great praise in love and chivalry, Parzival—Percival—finds his way on from childhood up, through humble searchings of the spirit, till he is ruler in the kingdom of the soul, where he designs that Lohengrin, his

eldest son, shall be his successor, while Kardeiss, his younger son, has rule over his earthly possessions.

How beautifully the Minnesingers could enter into the spirit of Nature, and at the same time, how much the spirit of Spring has always been prone to appeal to poetic sensibilities, may be judged from the following song of Conrad of Kirchberg, which is translated very closely and in the same meter as the original old high German poem. It is evident that none of the spirit of Spring was lost on this poet of the olden time, nor on the other hand that any possibility of poetic expression was missed by him. There is a music in the lilt of the verselets, eminently suggestive of the lyric effect that the new birth of things had on the poet himself and that he wished to convey to his readers. Of this, however, everyone must judge for himself and so we give the poem as it may be found in Roscoe's edition of Sismondi's "Literature of the South of Europe":

May, sweet May, again is come;
May, that frees the land from gloom.
Up, then, children, we will go
Where the blooming roses grow,
In a joyful company
We the bursting flowers will see;
Up! your festal dress prepare!
Where gay hearts are meeting, there
May hath pleasures most inviting
Heart, and sight, and ear delighting:
Listen to the bird's sweet song,
Hark! how soft it floats along!
Courtly dames our pleasures share,
Never saw I May so fair;
Therefore, dancing will we go:
Youth rejoice, the flowrets blow;

Sing ye! join the chorus gay!
Hail this merry, merry May!

The Meistersingers as a rule devoted themselves to more serious subjects and above all were attracted to the legends relating to the Holy Grail. Many another story was woven by them about medieval popular legends and fortunately a number of these have been preserved for us. Longfellow became very much interested in these stories and retold some of them for the English speaking people at the end of the nineteenth century. Our New England poet had a wealth of sympathy with these old medieval folk and their ways and thoughts and his narrative poems on these subjects are well deserving of attention.

Among these, Longfellow has told the story of Prince Henry, the *Arme Heinrich* beloved of the Meistersingers and the Minnesingers. Prince Henry whose kindness to his people became a proverb was stricken with leprosy. His people's experiences with his predecessors had been so different from those which they had with their kind prince that they were disconsolate over his misfortune. Leprosy was looked upon as an incurable disease and there seemed no hope for him but there was a tradition that down at Salerno there was a famous doctor who could cure leprosy. He could only accomplish this wonder of healing, however, by using the blood of an innocent person who was willing to sacrifice himself or herself for the sake of the ailing leper.

Elsie, the forester's daughter, on the prince's domain, who had often seen their handsome young ruler on his

hunting parties through the forest and had fallen in love with him, though almost without realizing it, and with no thought except of doing anything that she could for him, offered herself as a willing sacrifice so that the prince's life might be saved for his people. The prince utterly rejected at first the idea that anyone should die for him, but when it was urged upon him that his life meant so much for the benefit of his people, he was persuaded to try just what might be done for him at Salerno. Elsie traveled with the princely party down to Salerno where the great physician was to cure him.

According to the old medieval story, this physician who was to treat the prince, was really only the devil incarnate wandering around under the medieval character of Mephistopheles seeing how he could secure human souls for himself. When they reached their destination Prince Henry announced himself. Lucifer was quite sure that if the prince could be so selfish as to accept the sacrifice of another human being for himself, he would be able surely to get his soul without trouble, so his one purpose was to secure that of the innocent Elsie who so nobly offered, for the sake of her prince and his people, to go even to death. Longfellow has told the story of this scene and then of the forester and his wife who sit waiting to hear the news that their daughter is no more but who hear instead a happy ending of the tale which the old legend works out so well:

PRINCE HENRY:
Can you direct us to Friar Angelo?

LUCIFER:
He stands before you.

PRINCE HENRY:

Then you know our purpose.
I am Prince Henry of Hoheneck, and this
The maiden that I spake of in my letters.

LUCIFER:

It is a very grave and solemn business!
We must not be precipitate. Does she
Without compulsion, of her own free will,
Consent to this?

PRINCE HENRY:

Against all opposition,
Against all prayers, entreaties, protestations,
She will not be persuaded.

LUCIFER:

That is strange!
Have you thought well of it?

ELSIE:

I come not here
To argue, but to die. Your business is not
To question, but to kill me. I am ready.
I am impatient to be gone from here
Ere any thoughts of earth disturb again
The spirit of tranquillity within me.

PRINCE HENRY:

Would I had not come here! Would I were dead,
And thou wert in thy cottage in the forest,
And hadst not known me! Why have I done this?
Let me go back and die.

ELSIE:

It cannot be;
Not if these cold, flat stones on which we tread
Were coulters heated white, and yonder gateway
Flamed like a furnace with a sevenfold heat,
I must fulfil my purpose.

PRINCE HENRY:

I forbid it!
Not one step further. For I only meant

To put thus far thy courage to the proof.
It is enough. I, too, have strength to die,
For thou hast taught me!

ELSIE:

O my Prince! remember
Your promises. Let me fulfil my errand.
You do not look on life and death as I do.
There are two angels, that attend unseen
Each one of us, and in great books record
Our good and evil deeds. He who writes down
The good ones, after every action closes
His volume, and ascends with it to God.
The other keeps his dreadful day-book open
Till sunset, that we may repent; which doing,
The record of the action fades away,
And leaves a line of white across the page.
Now if my act be good, as I believe,
It cannot be recalled. It is already
Sealed up in heaven, as a good deed accomplished.
The rest is yours. Why wait you? I am ready.

(To her attendants)

Weep not, my friends! rather rejoice with me.
I shall not feel the pain, but shall be gone,
And you will have another friend in heaven.
Then start not at the creaking of the door
Through which I pass. I see what lies beyond it.

(To Prince Henry)

And you, O Prince! bear back my benison
Unto my father's house, and all within it.
This morning in the church I prayed for them,
After confession, after absolution,
When my whole soul was white, I prayed for them.
God will take care of them, they need me not.
And in your life let my remembrance linger,
As something not to trouble and disturb it,
But to complete it, adding life to life.

And if at times beside the evening fire,
You see my face among the other faces,
Let it not be regarded as a ghost
That haunts your house, but as a guest that loves you,
Nay even as one of your own family,
Without whose presence there were something wanting.
I have no more to say. Let us go in.

PRINCE HENRY:

Friar Angelo! I charge you on your life,
Believe not what she says, for she is mad,
And comes here not to die, but to be healed.

ELSIE:

Alas! Prince Henry!

LUCIFER:

Come with me; this way.

(Elsie goes in with Lucifer, who thrusts Prince Henry back and closes the door)

PRINCE HENRY:

Gone! and the light of all my life gone with her!
A sudden darkness falls upon the world!
Oh, what a vile and abject thing am I
That purchase length of days at such a cost!
Not by her death alone, but by the death
Of all that's good and true and noble in me!
All manhood, excellence, and self-respect,
All love, and faith, and hope, and heart are dead!
All my divine nobility of nature
By this one act is forfeited forever.
I am a Prince in nothing but in name!

(To the attendants)

Why did you let this horrible deed be done?
Why did you not lay hold on her, and keep her
From self-destruction? Angelo! murderer!

(Struggles at the door, but cannot open it)

ELSIE *(within)*:
Farewell, dear Prince! farewell!

PRINCE HENRY:
Unbar the door!

LUCIFER:
It is too late!

PRINCE HENRY:
It shall not be too late.

(They burst the door open and rush in)

THE FARM-HOUSE IN THE ODENWALD

(A summer afternoon. A table spread)

URSULA *(spinning)*:
I have marked it well—it must be true—
Death never takes one alone, but two!
Whenever he enters in at a door,
Under roof of gold or roof of thatch,
He always leaves it upon the latch,
And comes again ere the year is o'er.
Never one of a household only!
Perhaps it is a mercy of God,
Lest the dead there under the sod,
In the land of strangers, should be lonely!
Ah me! I think I am lonelier here!
It is hard to go—but harder to stay!
Were it not for the children, I should pray
That Death would take me within the year!
And Gottlieb!—he is at work all day,
In the sunny field, or the forest murk,
But I know that his thoughts are far away,
I know that his heart is not in his work!
And when he comes home to me at night
He is not cheery, but sits and sighs,
And I see the great tears in his eyes,
And try to be cheerful for his sake.
Only the children's hearts are light.

Mine is weary, and ready to break.
God help us! I hope we have done right;
We thought we were acting for the best!

(Looking through the open door)

Who is it coming under the trees?
A man, in the Prince's livery dressed!
He looks about him with doubtful face,
As if uncertain of the place.
He stops at the beehives;—now he sees
The garden gate;—he is going past;
Can he be afraid of the bees?
No; he is coming in at last!
He fills my heart with strange alarm!

(Enter a forester)

FORESTER:
Is this the tenant Gottlieb's farm?

URSULA:
This is his farm, and I his wife.
Pray sit. What may your business be?

FORESTER:
News from the Prince!

URSULA:
Of death or life?

FORESTER:
You put your questions eagerly!

URSULA:
Answer me, then! How is the Prince?

FORESTER:
I left him only two hours since
Homeward returning down the river,
As strong and well as if God, the Giver,
Had given him back his youth again.

URSULA *(despairing)*:
Then Elsie, my poor child, is dead!

FORESTER:

That, my good woman, I have not said.
Don't cross the bridge till you come to it,
Is a proverb old, and of excellent wit.

URSULA:

Keep me no longer in this pain!

FORESTER:

It is true your daughter is no more;—
That is, the peasant she was before.

URSULA:

Alas! I am simple and lowly bred,
I am poor, distracted, and forlorn.
And it is not well that you of the court
Should mock me thus, and make a sport
Of a joyless mother whose child is dead,
For you, too, were of mother born!

FORESTER:

Your daughter lives, and the Prince is well!
You will learn ere long how it all befell.
Her heart for a moment never failed;
But when they reached Salerno's gate,
The Prince's nobler self prevailed,
And saved her for a noble fate.
And he was healed, in his despair,
By the touch of St. Matthew's sacred bones;
Though I think the long ride in the open air,
That pilgrimage over stocks and stones,
In the miracle must come in for a share.

URSULA:

Virgin! who lovest the poor and lowly,
If the loud cry of a mother's heart
Can ever ascend to where thou art,
Into thy blessed hands and holy
Receive my prayer of praise and thanksgiving!
Let the hands that bore our Saviour bear it
Into the awful presence of God;

For thy feet with holiness are shod,
And if thou bearest it, He will hear it
Our child who was dead again is living!

FORESTER:

I did not tell you she was dead;
If you thought so 'twas no fault of mine;
At this very moment while I speak,
They are sailing homeward down the Rhine,
In a splendid barge, with golden prow,
And decked with banners white and red
As the colors on your daughter's cheek.
They call her the Lady Alicia now;
For the Prince in Salerno made a vow
That Elsie only would he wed.

URSULA:

Jesu Maria! what a change!
All seems to me so weird and strange!

FORESTER:

I saw her standing on the deck,
Beneath an awning cool and shady;
Her cap of velvet could not hold
The tresses of her hair of gold,
That flowed and floated like the stream,
And fell in masses down her neck.
As fair and lovely did she seem
As in a story or a dream
Some beautiful and foreign lady.
And the Prince looked so grand and proud,
And waved his hand thus to the crowd
That gazed and shouted from the shore,
All down the river, long and loud.

URSULA:

We shall behold our child once more;
She is not dead! She is not dead!
God, listening, must have overheard
The prayers, that, without sound or word,

Our hearts in secrecy have said!
Oh, bring me to her; for mine eyes
Are hungry to behold her face;
My very soul within me cries;
My very hands seem to caress her,
To see her, gaze at her, and bless her;
Dear Elsie, child of God and grace!

(Goes out toward the garden)

FORESTER:

There goes the good woman out of her head;
And Gottlieb's supper is waiting here;
A very capacious flagon of beer,
And a very portentous loaf of bread.
One would say his grief did not much oppress him.
Here's to the health of the Prince, God bless him!

(He drinks)

Ha! it buzzes and stings like a hornet!
And what a scene there, through the door!
The forest behind and the garden before,
And midway an old man of threescore,
With a wife and children that caress him.
Let me try still further to cheer and adorn it
With a merry, echoing blast of my cornet!

(Goes out blowing his horn)

THE CASTLE OF VAUTSBERG ON THE RHINE

(Prince Henry and Elsie standing on the terrace at evening)

(The sound of bells heard from a distance)

PRINCE HENRY:

We are alone. The wedding guests
Ride down the hill, with plumes and cloaks,
And the descending dark invests
The Niederwald, and all the nests
Among its hoar and haunted oaks.

ELSIE:

What bells are those, that ring so slow,
So mellow, musical, and low?

PRINCE HENRY:

They are the bells of Geisenheim,
That with their melancholy chime
Ring out the curfew of the sun.

ELSIE:

Listen, beloved.

PRINCE HENRY:

They are done!
Dear Elsie! many years ago
Those same soft bells at eventide
Rang in the ears of Charlemagne,
As, seated by Fastrada's side
At Ingelheim, in all his pride
He heard their sound with secret pain.

ELSIE:

Their voices only speak to me
Of peace and deep tranquillity,
And endless confidence in thee!

PRINCE HENRY:

Thou knowest the story of her ring,
How, when the court went back to Aix,
Fastrada died; and how the king
Sat watching by her night and day,
Till into one of the blue lakes
Which water that delicious land,
They cast the ring, drawn from her hand;
And the great monarch sat serene
And sad beside the fated shore,
Nor left the land forever more.

ELSIE:

That was true love.

PRINCE HENRY:

For him the queen
Ne'er did what thou hast done for me.

ELSIE:

Wilt thou as fond and faithful be?
Wilt thou so love me after death?

PRINCE HENRY:

In life's delight, in death's dismay,
In storm and sunshine, night and day,
In health, in sickness, in decay,
Here and hereafter, I am thine!
Thou hast Fastrada's ring. Beneath
The calm, blue waters of thine eyes,
Deep in thy steadfast soul it lies,
And, undisturbed by this world's breath,
With magic light its jewels shine!
This golden ring, which thou hast worn
Upon thy finger since the morn,
Is but a symbol and a semblance,
An outward fashion, a remembrance,
Of what thou wearest within unseen,
O my Fastrada, O my queen!
Behold! the hill-tops all aglow
With purple and with amethyst;
While the whole valley deep below
Is filled, and seems to overflow,
With a fast-rising tide of mist.
The evening air grows damp and chill;
Let us go in.

ELSIE:

Ah, not so soon.
See yonder fire! It is the moon
Slow rising o'er the eastern hill.
It glimmers on the forest tips,
And through the dewy foliage drips
In little rivulets of light,
And makes the heart in love with night.

PRINCE HENRY:

Oft on this terrace, when the day
Was closing, have I stood and gazed,

Richard I Cœur de Lion

And seen the landscape fade away,
And the white vapors rise and drown
Hamlet and vineyard, tower and town,
While far above the hill-tops blazed.
But then another hand than thine
Was gently held and clasped in mine,
Another head upon my breast
Was laid, as thine is now, at rest.
Why dost thou lift those tender eyes
With so much sorrow and surprise?
A minstrel's, not a maiden's hand,
Was that which in my own was pressed,
A manly form usurped thy place,
A beautiful, but bearded face,
That now is in the Holy Land,
Yet in my memory from afar
Is shining on us like a star.
But linger not. For while I speak,
A sheeted spectre white and tall,
The cold mist climbs the castle wall,
And lays his hand upon thy cheek!

(They go in)

CHAPTER VIII

Troubadours, Trouvêres

WHILE the northern nations were developing the beginnings of great literature, the southern nations, France and Italy, were also engaged in literary creations that were destined not to be forgotten. The impulse to vernacular poetry in Italy came from St. Francis who liked to call himself *il poverello di Dio,* "the little poor man of God," but modern critics, interested in the beginnings of medieval literature, give him the name of "the Troubadour of God." Goerres, the German historian of the beginning of the nineteenth century, who was so sympathetic toward the Middle Ages, went so far as to say that without St. Francis at the beginning of the thirteenth century there would have been no Dante at the end.

Renan, the well known French rationalist, historian and litterateur, whose own career might seem to put him out of sympathy with St. Francis' work, did not hesitate to proclaim St. Francis one of the greatest religious poets of all time, and his famous "Canticle of the Sun" as the greatest religious poem since the Hebrew psalms were written. From Renan, Matthew Arnold received his introduction to St. Francis as a literary man and his own studies, persistently followed in the domain of Franciscan literature, led him to write the famous passages in the "Essays in Criticism" which are usually such a sur-

prise to those who think of Mr. Arnold as the rationalizing critic rather than the sympathetic admirer of a medieval saint:

"In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Appennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St. Francis. His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age; more interesting than even the century of the Reformation; and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which this interest attaches itself, is St. Francis. And why? Because of the profound popular instinct which enabled him, more than any man since the primitive age, to fit religion for popular use. He brought religion to the people. He founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the Church. He transformed monachism by uprooting the stationary monk, delivering him from the bondage of property, and sending him, as a mendicant friar, to be a stranger and sojourner, not in the wilderness, but in the most crowded haunts of men, to console them and to do them good. This popular instinct of his is at the bottom of his famous marriage with poverty. Poverty and suffering are the conditions of the people, the multitude, the immense majority of mankind; and it was towards this people that his soul yearned. 'He listens,' it was said of him, 'to those to whom God himself will not listen.' "

The more one reads the English apostle of sweetness and light on St. Francis the greater the wonder grows. With a sympathy quite unexpected in the man for whom the Deity had become merely "a stream of tendency that makes for righteousness," he realized the influence that this supreme lover of a personal God had over his generation, and his brother poet soul flew to its affinity in spite of the apparently insurmountable obstacle of extreme aloofness of spiritual temperament.

Matthew Arnold proceeds:

"So in return, as no other man, St. Francis was listened to. When an Umbrian town or village heard of his approach, the whole population went out in joyful procession to meet him, with green boughs, flags, music, and songs of gladness. The master, who began with two disciples, could in his own lifetime (and he died at forty-five) collect to keep Whitsuntide with him, in presence of an immense multitude, five thousand of his Minorites. He found fulfilment to his prophetic cry: 'I hear in my ears the sound of the tongues of all the nations who shall come unto us: Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Englishmen. The Lord will make of us a great people, even unto the ends of the earth.'"

When we reach the next paragraph the secret of this surprising paradoxical sympathy is out. It is the literary and esthetic side of St. Francis that has appealed to him, and like Renan he does not hesitate to give "the poor little man of God" a place among the great original geniuses of all time, associating his name with that of Dante:

"Prose could not satisfy this ardent soul, and he made

poetry. Latin was too learned for this simple, popular nature, and he composed in his mother tongue, in Italian. The beginnings of the mundane poetry of the Italians are in Sicily, at the court of kings; the beginnings of their religious poetry are in Umbria, with St. Francis. His are the humble upper waters of a mighty stream: at the beginning of the thirteenth century, it is St. Francis; at the end, Dante. Now it happens that St. Francis, too, like the Alexandrian songstress, has his hymn for the sun, for Adonis; 'Canticle of the Sun,' 'Canticle of the Creatures,' the poem goes by both names. Like the Alexandrian hymn, it is designed for popular use, but not for use by King Ptolemy's people; artless in language, irregular in rhythm, it matches with the childlike genius that produced it, and the simple natures that loved and repeated it."

Probably the most satisfactory translation for those who may not be able to appreciate the original of this sublime hymn that has evoked so many tributes, is the following literal rendering into English in which a quite successful attempt to give the naïf rhythm of the original Italian, which necessarily disappears in any formal rhymed translation, has been made by Father Paschal Robinson of the Order of St. Francis for his American edition of the writings of St. Francis.*

Here begin the praises of the Creatures which the Blessed Francis made to the praise and honor of God while he was ill at St. Damian's:

*Philadelphia, The Dolphin Press, 1906. Reverend Father Robinson has now been made an archbishop and has been sent on various diplomatic missions for the Holy See.

Most high, omnipotent, good Lord,
Praise, glory and honor and benediction all, are Thine,
To Thee alone do they belong, Most High,
And there is no man fit to mention Thee.
Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
Especially to my worshipful brother sun,
The which lights up the day, and through him dost Thou
brightness give;
And beautiful is he and radiant with splendor great;
Of Thee, Most High, signification gives.
Praised be my Lord, for sister moon and for the stars,
In heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious and fair.
Praised be my Lord for brother wind
And for the air and clouds and fair and every kind of weather,
By which Thou givest to Thy creatures nourishment.
Praised be my Lord for sister water,
The which is greatly helpful and humble and precious and pure.
Praised be my Lord for brother fire,
By the which Thou lightest up the dark.
And fair is he and gay and mighty and strong.
Praised be my Lord for our sister, mother earth,
The which sustains and keeps us
And brings forth divers fruits with grass and flowers bright.
Praised be my Lord for those who for Thy love forgive
And weakness bear and tribulation.
Blessed those who shall in peace endure,
For by Thee, Most High, shall they be crowned.
Praised be my Lord for our sister, the bodily death,
From the which no living man can flee.
Woe to them who die in mortal sin;
Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy most holy will,
For the second death shall do them no ill.
Praise ye and bless ye my Lord, and give Him thanks,
And be subject unto Him with great humility.

At least as charming as the Minnesingers in their tributes to their lady loves and their lyric descriptions of the

beauties of Spring, were the Troubadours and Trouvêres as well as the Trovatori of the southern countries. They wrote many a tuneful trifle, sometimes deserving of much more serious consideration than the application of such a term to them would seem to imply and not a few of them have come down to us through the centuries since. When tuneful trifles have lived for seven centuries there is surely something more than a mere musical verse setting for trivialities in them.

One of the best known of the Troubadours is Arnaud of Marveil who was born in very humble circumstances but succeeded in raising himself by his poetic genius to be the companion of ruling princes and the friend of high nobility. This was the career open to talent by which men might rise in the world. Among the Provençals he has been called the Master of Love though this is a name which Petrarch reserved especially for Arnaud Daniel, while he calls Marveil the less famous of the Arnauds. An example of his work as "the Poet of Love" that is typical of what is usually considered to have been the favorite mode of the Troubadour poets runs as follows:

All I behold recalls the memory
Of her I love. The freshness of the hour
Th' enamell'd fields, the many coloured flower,
Speaking of her, move me to melody.
Had not the poets, with their courtly phrase,
  Saluted many a fair of meaner worth,
I could not now have render'd thee the praise
  So justly due, of "Fairest of the Earth."
To name thee thus had been to speak thy name,
And waken, o'er thy cheek, the blush of modest
    shame.

An example of the love of Nature which characterizes some of Arnaud de Marveil's work will serve to show how thoroughly he entered into the spirit of the springtime and how much all the sights and sounds of Nature found an echo in his poetic spirit. The translation of this as of the preceding specimen from Arnaud is taken from the English edition of the "Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe" by Sismondi, and this translation we owe to Thomas Roscoe, the well-known author of the life of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who, considering that Sismondi does not furnish enough of specimens of this Troubadour poet, inserts the following verses, for the translation of which he acknowledges himself indebted to the kindness of friends, perhaps a modest concealment of his own work:

Oh! how sweet the breeze of April,
Breathing soft as May draws near!
While through nights of tranquil beauty,
Songs of gladness meet the ear:
Every bird his well-known language
Uttering in the morning's pride,
Revelling in joy and gladness
By his happy partner's side.

When, around me, all is smiling,
When to life the young birds spring,
Thoughts of love, I cannot hinder,
Come, my heart inspiriting—
Nature, habit, both incline me
In such joy to bear my part:
With such sounds of bliss around me
Could I wear a sadden'd heart?

His description of his lady-love is another example of

his worship of Nature in a different strain, which serves to show that a lover's exaggeration of the beauties of his lady is not a modern development of *la belle passion:*

Fairer than the far-famed Helen,
Lovelier than the flow'rets gay,
Snow-white teeth, and lips truth-telling,
Heart as open as the day;
Golden hair, and fresh bright roses—
Heaven, who formed a thing so fair,
Knows that never yet another
Lived, who can with thee compare.

A single stanza from a love song by Bertrand de Born will show better than any amount of critical appreciation how beautifully he can treat the more serious side of love. While the Troubadours are usually said to have sung their love strains in less serious vein than their German brother poets of the north, this has the ring of tenderness and truth about it and yet is not in these qualities very different from others of his songs that are well known. The translation we have chosen is that made by Roscoe who has rendered a number of the songs of the Troubadours into English verse that presents a very charming equivalent of the original. Bertrand is insisting with his lady-love that she must not listen to the rumors she may hear from others with regard to his faithfulness:

I cannot hide from thee how much I fear
The whispers breathed by flatterers in thine ear
Against my faith. But turn not, oh, I pray!
That heart so true, so faithful, so sincere,
So humble and so frank, to me so dear,
Oh, lady! turn it not from me away.

At times one is surprised to find pretty tributes to

Nature even in the midst of songs that are devoted to war. The two things that were nearest the hearts of these Troubadour poets were war and their lady-loves, but the beauties of Nature became mixed up not only with their love songs but also with their battle hymns, or at least with their ardent descriptions of military preparations and the glories of war. An excellent example of this is to be found in the following stanza written by William of Saint Gregory, a Troubadour who is best known for his songs of war rather than of tenderness:

The beautiful spring delights me well,
When flowers and leaves are growing;
And it pleases my heart to hear the swell
Of the birds' sweet chorus flowing
In the echoing wood;
And I love to see all scattered around
Pavilions and tents on martial ground;
And my spirit finds it good
To see on the level plains beyond
Gay knights and steeds caparison'd.

Occasionally the Troubadours indulge in religious poetry though usually not of a mystical or profoundly devotional character. Even the famous Peyrols, who is so well known for his love songs, sometimes wandered into religious poetry that was not unworthy to be placed beside his lyric effusions on other topics. Peyrols is best known, perhaps, for his lamentations over King Richard the Lion Heart's fate, for he had been with that monarch on the Crusade, and like most of the Troubadours who went with the army, drank in deep admiration for the chivalric King. After his visit to the Holy Land on

this occasion one stanza of his song in memory of that visit runs as follows:*

I have seen the Jordan river,
  I have seen the holy grave.
Lord! to thee my thanks I render
  For the joys thy goodness gave,
Showing to my raptured sight
The spot whereon thou saw'st the light.

Vessel good and favoring breezes,
  Pilot, trusty, soon shall we
Once more see the towers of Marseilles
  Rising o'er the briny sea.
Farewell, Acre, farewell, all,
Of Temple or of Hospital:

Now, alas! the world's decaying,
  When shall we once more behold
Kings like lion-hearted Richard,
  (or) France's monarch, stout and bold?

The Italian Troubadours were very much more inclined to the writing of religious poetry than their brother poets across the Alps in France. Most of these Italian poets devoted themselves to the writing of Latin hymns rather than poems in the vernacular Italian but there are some of these Italian poems that are well deserving of the immortality that now seems assured to them after they have lived for these seven centuries.

Jacopone da Todi, the Franciscan, to whom is usually attributed the authorship of the *Stabat Mater,* wrote a series of poems in the Italian vernacular which make him, as has been said, perhaps the most picturesque figure in early Italian literature. Those interested in Chris-

*Translated by Roscoe.

tian mysticism are sure to be attracted by him, while lovers of poetry who may not sympathize with his religious attitude cannot fail, as Evelyn Underhill said in her "Life of Jacopone da Todi" (London, 1919), "to admire the magnificent poems in which his religious feelings are expressed, the mystical love songs matching in the sphere of spiritual passion the most beautiful lyrics of Tuscan and Bolognese contemporaries."

Only in recent years has there been sufficient interest aroused in Jacopone to enable us to appreciate him properly. Very little was written about him in English until this century and even the Italian scholars have been content to leave much of his most deeply poetic work without such commentary as would make its appreciation easier for those of other countries. Here is a characteristic example of his mystical poetry, his *Lauda XLVI* with the title, "How the Soul Comes Through Faith to Things Invisible":

Through these two eyes set in my head,
Daylight transmits, and pencils clear
Within my mind, the image here,
Of each corporeal thing.

So with these eyes set in my head,
I see the Sacrament divine
Shown by the priest, and visible
As Bread from out the altar shrine.
But by the mystic light of faith,
Other the vision that is mine,
Eyes of my mind behold it shine,
My mind, whose power is reasoning.

Four of my senses say to me:
"This that thou seest is simple bread."—

Yea, all save Hearing are deceived,
  Nor can they enter, and be fed.
For lo! beneath these visible forms
  Stands Christ, hid deep in lowlihead,
  And to the soul, O mystery dread!
    He gives Himself for nourishing.

And dost thou ask, "How can this be?"
  By reason wouldst thou see, and show?
And wouldst thou force the Power divine
  In reason's narrow yoke to go?
He for His pleasure made the heavens,
  Unquestioned:—yet thy queries flow,
  The secret of this Act to know,
    Though swift it be in vanishing.

Come, with the staff of faith, approach
  This mystery thou canst not see;
Come to this holy Sacrament,
  In confidence and certainty;
For Christ, who hides Himself therein,
  His sweet goodwill bestows on thee,
  And knits thee to this mystery—
    This grace that He is offering.

Our holy Church shall be the court,
  Wherein these nuptials shall be made:
Then come to her obediently,
  In faith she'll cloak thee, undismayed:
She will present thee to thy Lord,
  His bride, beloved and unafraid;
  Thy wedded soul, in faith arrayed,
    Shall hear new songs around her ring.

And here a wondrous love is formed,
  A love of God invisible:
And that He grieves at every sin,
  The soul not sees, but feels full well.
Yea, miracle is infinite!—

A Heaven is made of deepest Hell:
And frenzied love her grief must tell
For bygone days of wandering.

O evil life that I have led,
In worldly revel and repose!
O life all fetid and diseased!
O mire, that for my couch I chose!
I scorned the heavenly life—I scorned
The sweetness of that Fragrant Rose:—
Now I must bear these bitter throes,
And mourn with cruel sorrowing.

The rhyme schemes of this mystical lyricist of seven centuries ago, are sometimes very complicated and are carried over from one stanza to another. Here is an interesting example of that *(Lauda XXVI)* as translated by Evelyn Underhill. It has elements that recall Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." The translation is made in the meter and rhyme scheme of the original:

Oh man, I mourn for thee
Who still wouldst fly from me,
And I to save thee wait.

Oh Man, for thy soul's new birth,
To set thy feet in the Way,
I was incarnate on earth,
Of Mary, the Virgin May:—
And yet thou wilt not obey,
Unthankful art thou to Me,
Uncourteous and ingrate.

If I were a cruel lord,
An evil master to thee,
Well might'st thou then afford
Out of My hands to flee;
Foolish indeed must thou be,

For on the good I do thee
Thou wilt not meditate.

All creatures my Hand hath made,
To serve thee in sequence true;
And all in order arrayed,
Each one his duty to do;
Pleasures before thee they strew,
Yet Me, the Maker of all,
Thou wilt not contemplate.

Jacopone's lyrics are sometimes in the longer lines more suitable for the solemnity of the subjects which they treat. Here, for instance, is a very interesting example of the longer line in a seven-line stanza, the seventh line of which always rhymes in the same sound throughout the poem. Its title is, "How True Love Is Never Idle":

His time is lost indeed who loves not Thee,
Jesu, sweet love, most dear and most divine.

Love, whoso loves Thee doth not idle stand,
For, tasting Thee, he finds so sweet a bliss,
That day and night his longing still is fanned
To love Thee more, make Thee more wholly his:
So blest the heart that shelters 'neath Thy hand!
Nor can he tell, who knoweth naught of this,
The honeyed taste, the savour that is Thine.

Thy savour with none other can compare,
Alas, my heart! whose portion is so scant!
Naught else consoles me,—nothing can I care
For all the world, if Thee I needs must want.
Sweet love of Jesus! all my hope is there!
Rule Thou my heart, lest I should fall, and grant
That I may knot Thy love more close to mine.

Love, to Thy sweetness Thou dost change the whole
Of life, and force and bitterness dost kill:
Yea, every Saint doth prove it in his soul,
And cruel death with sweetness dost Thou fill:
Thy sweet electuary can console
And strengthen them, O Christ, for every ill,
So gently with their heart dost Thou combine.

The heart that hath not Thee must needs be sad;
Jesu, Thou joy and solace of mankind:
Christ, without Thee no spirit can be glad,
Ah wretched me! whose love is chill and blind!
Yet, if a man all other treasure had
Save Thee, he loseth all, and naught shall find,
And far from Thee, in bitterness must pine.

Perhaps the fine lyric quality of Jacopone's religious and profoundly mystical poetry was called to life by his sad experience on his wedding day. Jacopone was a successful lawyer who in the midst of his pursuit of worldly ambition had, to a great extent, lost his religious faith. His bride was very much disturbed by his neglect of religion. On their wedding day she was crushed by the fall of a stand at a spectacle. When he loosed her robes in the hope of saving her life, he found beneath a hair shirt that she told him as she bade him a last farewell, had been worn for him, and the restoration of his faith. Not long after, he became a Franciscan and then the author of the famous hymns and mystical poems that are attributed to him. The *Stabat Mater* is sometimes said to be the saddest poem ever written. Certainly pathos was never more wonderfully expressed than by this man whose own austerity initiated by the example of his

belovèd bride made him ready to strip himself of every trivial interest in the cult of the eternal verities.*

Ozanam in his volume, "The Franciscan Poets," has told the story of Jacopone as a brother spirit alone can tell it. To Ozanam we are indebted for the discovery of the importance of Jacopone—that Laureate of Folly—who was content to win for himself scorn and derision, to be judged a fool in the eyes of the world in order to win wisdom in the sight of God. As the translator of Ozanam's "The Franciscan Poets in Italy of the Thirteenth Century," Miss Amy Nellen recalls the old-time designation of Jacopone as "The Troubadour of God"—a title for which he is the rival of his holy father, St. Francis. She adds, "His claim to greatness rests preëminently on his passionate utterances of glowing mysticism and his poems have been well described by Diepenbrock as 'a wonderful garden of mystic poetry in which the singer leads us from the first struggles of conversion by devious

*Matthew Arnold in his splendid sonnet on "Austerity," as the poet must practise it, has told the story of Jacopone. That sonnet was inspired by Jacopone and deserves a place in any consideration of him; especially as it emphasizes the fact that Jacopone was one of the early predecessors of Dante who not only wrote supremely great Latin hymns but also was a pioneer in the writing of poetry in the Italian vernacular and who proved a stimulus for his great successors in the Peninsula.

> That son of Italy who tried to blow,
> Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
> In his light youth amid a festal throng
> Sate with his bride to see a public show.
> Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
> Youth like a star: and what to youth belong—
> Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
> A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,
> 'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
> Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found
> A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.
> Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
> Radiant, adorn'd outside; a hidden ground
> Of thought and of austerity within.

paths to the inner ways of purity, revelation and unity.' "

Ozanam speaks of him as "the Blessed Jacopone." His English translator says, "This genius filled with the madness of poetic frenzy, is only one of the race of giants whom Ozanam groups round St. Francis—the tallest, greatest and most beautiful of the race." One of these others all too little known whose reputation Ozanam has restored was Brother Pacificus, "the King of Verse." Unfortunately no poem that can surely be attributed to him has come down from that time. It was not that the Franciscan cloisters discouraged poetry, for there is a considerable group of poets among the early followers of St. Francis, but that this former Troubadour who had delighted in the praises of men and women for his poetry wished to expiate his renown, as Ozanam says, "and concealed his genius in some of those anonymous canticles which were so popular in the Middle Ages just as he had concealed a laurel crown beneath the hood of the order of St. Francis." His title, "King of Verse," has come to him because his brother Troubadours proclaimed him the prince of contemporaries, and the Emperor even revived on his behalf an ancient Roman custom and awarded him the laurel crown for poetry which was later to adorn the brow of Petrarch and of Tasso. The one story that we have of him is that the poet-religious one day saw the heavens opened and in the midst a vacant throne and a voice told him that the throne had once belonged to a fallen angel but that God was reserving it for "the little poor man of God," *il poverello di Dio,* of Assisi.

Jacopone wrote a series of poems in short lines that were to be recited in connection with the mystery plays that were popular in Italy during the thirteenth century. These were meant for the people, were written in the vernacular and in a spirit of simplicity that would enable even childish minds to understand and be deeply touched by them. One of these little poems on the Nativity has been translated by Miss Macdonell in "Sons of St. Francis":

Sure ne'er hath been,
Such court'sy seen
'Mong mortal men. Today
The Omnipotent
His only Son hath sent,
Our ransom for to pay.
Now, since He's here,
Show your heart's cheer,
And high content.
Feasting is meet
The little King to greet,
That's come with us to stay,
Give now your thought and care
Prepare, prepare;
Make ready for your guest,
With finest bread
His table must be spread,
And all your best,
Sweep hearth and floor;
Be all your vessels' store
Shining and clean,
Then bring the little guest
And give him of your best
Of meat and drink. Yet more
Ye owe than meat.
One gift at your King's feet

Lay now. I mean
A heart full to the brim
Of love, and all for Him
And from all envy clear.

If Dante had never written "The Divine Comedy" we would probably have known him as one of these Troubadours. As it is, he has written two sonnets to Beatrice that are probably the greatest tribute ever paid to a woman. The first of these is:

He sees completely fullest bliss abound
Who among ladies sees my Lady's face;
Those that with her do go are surely bound
To give God thanks for such exceeding grace.
And in her beauty such strange might is found,
That envy finds in other hearts no place;
So she makes them walk with her, clothed all round
With love and faith and courteous gentleness.
The sight of her makes all things lowly be;
Nor of herself alone she gives delight,
But each through her receiveth honor due.
And in her acts is such great courtesy,
That none can recollect that wondrous sight,
Who sighs not for it in Love's sweetness true.

It will be noted that Dante has nothing to say of the personal appearance of his beloved. This is true, however, of a whole series of poems to and about her. There are many of them and Dante was living at a time when the poets sang of the physical charms of their *inamoratæ* but Dante himself never seems to have thought for a moment of her physical qualities. What he finds worthy to praise is her goodness which shines out from her features so that everyone rejoices in it, while a sweetness fills the heart

Reims Cathedral

as if a heavenly visitor had come. Her supreme charm for him is that with all her beauty, envy finds no place in others' hearts because she is so clothed around with love and faith and courteous gentleness that there is no incitement to envy but only to sympathy and joy.

The second of these sonnets of Dante is in very much the same strain and yet it has an individuality of its own that makes it ever so much more than a mere echo of the first one. It too is hailed as a masterpiece of poetry. For this reason it deserves a place here:

So gentle and so fair she seems to be,
  My Lady, when she others doth salute,
  That every tongue becomes, all trembling, mute,
And every eye is half afraid to see;
She goes her way and hears men's praises free,
  Clothed in a garb of kindness, meek and low,
  And seems as if from heaven she came, to show
Upon the earth a wondrous mystery:
To one who looks on her she seems so kind,
  That through the eye a sweetness fills the heart,
  Which only he can know who doth it try.
And through her face there breatheth from her mind
  A spirit sweet and full of Love's true art,
Which to the soul saith, as it cometh, "Sigh."

CHAPTER IX

Medieval Women Writers

THREE women writers of the Middle Ages have been the subject of special study in recent years because of the feminist movement and the reawakening of interest in feminine opportunities for a career. Two of these three were Benedictine nuns, Hroswitha,* the nun dramatist of the tenth century, and St. (Abbess) Hildegarde, who wrote on scientific subjects. The third was Christine de Pisan, a widow who made a living for herself and her children by her writings. Of these three the two nuns are by far the more important though Christine de Pisan's writings in prose and verse gained her wide renown in her own time. Her contemporaries did not hesitate to compare her eloquence with that of Cicero and her wisdom with that of Cato. She wrote too much, however, for any of it to be of surpassing quality though the number of her books gives an excellent idea of her industry. Just at the turn of the fifteenth century "in the short space of six years (1397-1403) she wrote fifteen important books without mentioning minor essays." This is her own declaration and she notes that the shorter essays were sufficiently numerous to fill some seventy copy books.

*Hroswitha's name is spelled in many different ways: Hrotsuitha, Hrotswitha, but also Hrosvitha. There has been a tendency in recent years to drop the initial "H" and spell the name simply Roswitha but while the "H" is silent in pronunciation it would seem better to retain it in order to remind readers of the original form. Hence the spelling that has been adopted throughout this book.

It will not be surprising for those who know something of the history of the Benedictine order, monks and nuns, that two Benedictine nuns should have become the authors of important works. When in the midst of the serious disturbances to civilization which came as the result of the invasion of the barbarians from the north, large numbers of men looked for a refuge from the vicissitudes of the time where they could cultivate in peace the intellectual and spiritual life, Benedict of Nursia founded the order called after his name, Benedictines, who represent the beginnings of the Monks of the West. They very soon spread throughout Europe and each of the Benedictine monasteries became a focus of culture and of education. Benedict's sister, Scholastica, realized that something of a similar nature was needed for the women of the time and so she established the Benedictine nunneries which provided opportunities for women to cultivate the intellectual and spiritual life under appropriate conditions. The Benedictine nuns gathered books for libraries, copied books in their scriptoria or writing rooms, occupied themselves with the making of altar linens and vestments as well as miniatures for missals and in general busied themselves very much as women members of religious orders do in our day, for the daughters of the neighboring nobility were committed to their charge for education and for formation of character.

It is from among these Benedictine nuns that we have the two writers, Hroswitha and Hildegarde, whose works have attracted no little attention in recent years. Hroswitha was a simple nun and remained all her life without holding any important official position in the convent.

But for this it might have been thought that perhaps abbesses and others in official positions were free to express themselves with their pens but that this would scarcely be permitted to the ordinary nuns. What we find, however, is that when Hroswitha's talent as a writer was recognized by her abbess, she was urged to go on with her writing. Her writing brought her in contact with royalty and with a number of distinguished people in her time. The other writer, Abbess Hildegarde, was, as we shall see, one of the most important personages of her century (the twelfth) when a number of important persons were doing significant work, in intimate contact by correspondence with the most distinguished men of the time. Manifestly women writers were not looked upon askance and inspiration and encouragement were afforded them in their work.

HROSWITHA, THE NUN DRAMATIST

One of the greatest surprises for most people in the literature of the Middle Ages is to learn that in the tenth century when it is usually presumed that civilization was at its darkest and culture at its lowest ebb, a nun in a convent along the Rhine at Gandersheim wrote a series of dramas. Gandersheim is a small town in the province of Hildesheim south of Hildesheim itself. It is now part of the duchy of Brunswick. The town lies between Göttingen and Hanover, the part of Germany where the best German is said to be spoken at the present time. This region has always been noted for its culture so that the writing of the dramas here carries less surprise with it than it would elsewhere.

The nun of Gandersheim wrote plays for her convent but it is not known whether or not they were ever presented on the stage though the manuscript has something like stage directions on the margin. They were called comedies because they ended happily. They ended happily because the climax of the action was martyrdom and the happy ending came in heaven. One thing was certain, there was no doubt at all about the permanency of the situation that came at the end of the play.

The reason why she wrote the plays as given by herself is almost more interesting than the fact that she should have written them at all. She says in a preface that we shall quote as an example of her prose style—the original was in Latin—that she wrote her plays to provide edifying reading for the members of the community whose religious peace in the convent might be disturbed by the reading of Terence who she declares was very popular at that time among monks and nuns. Terence was popular mainly because of the simple directions of his Latin and because he was the best source of conversational Latin that the monks possessed. According to rule, at certain hours, the scholars among them, especially during what was called recreation, that is the periods of relaxation after meals, were required to converse in Latin. There were other reasons besides this for monastic interest in Terence that were not so edifying, according to Hroswitha.

She took Terence as the model of her style in her plays because she felt that if she thus attracted the attention of scholars of the monasteries and convents the reading of her model Christian comedies would do them good

rather than the harm that might be derived from the pagan poet. In the preface to her plays she says:

"There are many Christians (and we cannot relieve ourselves entirely of this reproach) who, charmed by the choice eloquence of the language prefer the vanity of secular books to the wisdom of the Holy Scripture. There are others so attached to the sacred writings and full of contempt for other pagan productions, yet cannot keep from reading time and again the fictions of Terence, and, won by his charm of diction, stain their souls by the knowledge of criminal actions. It is for this that I, 'the strong voice of Gandersheim' (the name Hrodsuind in old Saxon means strong voice), do not hesitate to imitate in my writings a man whom so many permit themselves to read in order to celebrate in the measure of my feeble intellect the virtues of Christian women while employing the same form of composition which served the ancients to describe shameful conduct."

Hroswitha is usually said to have been somewhat past twenty when she entered the Benedictine convent of Gandersheim shortly after the middle of the tenth century. This foundation received only ladies of German birth and of the better class and was highly favored by the Saxon dynasty. The Emperor, Otto the Great, was a special patron of the convent. Shortly after Hroswitha entered the convent, Gerberga, a daughter of Henry of Bavaria and a niece of the Emperor, Otto I (the Great), was consecrated abbess of the convent. Her encouragement caused Hroswitha to take up the career of a writer. She wrote the chronicle of Otto I in verse and afterwards the chronicle of his son, Otto II. She lived long enough to write a versified chronicle also of Otto III who, because of his intellectual endowments, was known under the title of "The Wonder of the World." He died just at the

beginning of the eleventh century and Hroswitha seems not to have long survived him.

What is especially interesting about the convent of Gandersheim is the close relationship between the reigning imperial family and the members of the community. The three Ottos were distinguished rulers and the third particularly was not only a patron of learning but he was a scholar himself. Hroswitha's career, therefore, throws great light on this period for it makes very clear how sincere and deep must have been the desire for culture at this time which is usually looked upon as so lacking in anything of that kind. Hroswitha tells us that besides the encouragement of the abbess, she owed much of her impulse to write to the inspiration of one of her teachers, also a member of the community, Sister Rikkard. We know now that her writings attracted the attention of a great many in her time and that in all the convents along the Rhine, and there were many of them, she was very well known, but she was also known in other parts of Germany and in France.

Cardinal Gasquet, the well-known English Benedictine writer on medieval history, in his introduction to the translation of the plays of Hroswitha into English,* calls particular attention to the connotations of scholarship revealed by the writings of Hroswitha:

"We find here an author familiar not only with the Scriptures, the works of the Fathers of the Church, of the agiographers and of the Christian philosophers, but also with Plautus, Terence, Horace, Virgil and Ovid—

*London, 1923.

an author who on her own confession took the theatre of Terence as her model."

All this, it must not be forgotten, in that tenth century usually considered the darkest of all the Middle Ages. There is no hint that the convent of Gandersheim in which she lived was in any way unusual as regards culture and scholarship though in her presence there it may have had the advantage of a special genius manifesting itself. Cardinal Gasquet, a Benedictine himself, was very much interested in the Benedictine environment in which these plays were written. He says in his introduction, "The abbey of Gandersheim was founded about 850 by Ludolph, duke of Saxony, at the request of his wife Oda, a Frankish princess. Although these were what men call the 'dark ages,' the darkness was comparative. The Saxon court at this time was enlightened and the abbeys of Saxony, notably that of Corbei, were centers of learning and civilization. Gandersheim was one of the 'free' abbeys, that is to say, its abbess held it direct from the King. Her rights of overlordship extended for many miles. She had her own law courts and sent her men at arms into the fields. In fact she enjoyed the usual privileges and undertook the usual responsibilities of a feudal baron and as such had the right to a seat in the Imperial Diet (the parliament of the empire). Coins are extant struck by the abbesses of Gandersheim whose portraits they bear."

These are rights and privileges of women usually supposed to be utterly non-existent during the Middle Ages or indeed at any other time except in the last generation or so. It is easy to understand what an impetus to self-

expression would be given to women who had such rights and privileges and who used them not only for the benefit of their own sex but for all those with whom they were brought in intimate relation. Tenants who lived under the rule of abbots were said to be particularly happy. "Happy those who live under the crozier," was an old proverb. This was declared to be especially true of those who had the good fortune to live on convent estates under the rule of abbesses. With all this before us as to woman's position at that time it becomes much easier to understand how Hroswitha came to write her comedies in the tenth century in an environment which encouraged in every way her intellectual development and powers of expression.

By a fortunate chance, almost Providential it would seem, one complete manuscript copy of Hroswitha's plays and only one survived the vicissitudes of time for five hundred years until the invention of printing. This was printed in a magnificent *editio princeps* edited by the great renaissance scholar, Conrad Celtes of Vienna, just at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It escapes being one of the incunabula, or cradle books of the art, by having its date the year after 1500 instead of before it. When it was first printed there was serious question whether Celtes himself had not invented the dramas which he attributed to Hroswitha. There was a claim made for the authorship of them by St. Hilda of Whitby, the patroness of Cædmon. No doubt is left now that the author was the Saxon nun of the tenth century who, inspired by the reading of classic authors and the interest she saw in them around her, wrote a series of dramas and

poems that would provide edifying reading for the religious—perhaps entertainment on presentation—and would save them from contamination by pagan writers.

Only for the preservation of this single manuscript it would have been almost impossible to believe that such a writer as Hroswitha lived in the tenth century. Undoubtedly there must have been many others, some in her own convent, others in the sister convents along the Rhine, inspired to write as she did. It would be impossible to believe that she was the only one with ambition to be a writer and dramatist. There is a possibility that some of the works thus written may yet be found by research among manuscript material. Probably they are lost beyond recall through the destruction of the monasteries during the religious revolution in Germany.

There are six comedies altogether and all of them end in martyrdom instead of marriage. They are comedies because, as we have said, martyrdom is looked upon as a happy termination, and then the material of the drama is always concerned with the ordinary events of life, as in the case of *Dulcitius,* the argument of which will be given. It never rises to tragic heights, except in the matter of fidelity to Christian duty. The first on the list of comedies is *Gallicanus,* the hero of which is a distinguished officer in the imperial army. He falls in love with the daughter of the Emperor Constantine, who has, however, already vowed her virginity to God. Gallicanus, bitterly disappointed, asks to be sent on active service to the East and in the midst of a battle in which he is in great danger of death, resolves to become a Christian. Not only this, but he vows a life of celibacy. He returns

to Rome, where his Christianity is discovered and he receives the crown of martyrdom from Julian the Apostate. In some ways this would remind us of Calderon's famous *El Magico Prodigioso,* in which Cyprian falls in love with Justina, but eventually is converted and suffers martyrdom with her because he has learned to believe in Christianity through her.

At least one of Hroswitha's plays, *Paphnutius,* has been played in recent years. The Pioneer Players in January, 1914, gave that play in London, and the stage performance was welcomed with lively interest. The translator of the plays, Christopher St. John, says in his preface, "*Abraham* and *Paphnutius* show Hroswitha at her best as a dramatist. In both plays the scenes are well knit, the characterization deft and sure, and the dialogue admirably expressive. The opening scenes of *Abraham* reveal that power to suggest character and situations without wordy explanations which is essential in drama." With regard to the scene in which the hermit, throwing off his worldly disguise, shows his hair grown white through vigils and fasts and his tonsure, the badge of his thorn-crowned Master, and in words more compassionate than upbraiding moves his niece to abandon her evil life and do penance for her sins, the translator says: "It is indeed amazing that so true and touching a scene dealing with a subject which has led later dramatists into false sentiment, coarseness or mere preaching, should have been written nearly a thousand years ago by an obscure nun in a convent in lower Saxony."

The story of *Paphnutius* concerns Thais, whose life has been the subject of no little attention during the past

generation. She was the subject of a well-known novel by Anatole France. Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton in the foreword which he wrote for the program of the first performance of *Paphnutius* compared the treatment of the theme by the two writers separated by nearly a thousand years, the naïve nun of Gandersheim and the sophisticated Anatole France, rather to the advantage of the older writer. He said that "In the Thais of the great French romancer the whole point is that Thais repents but that Paphnutius relapses. The nun dramatist saves both souls; Anatole France loses one of them. That is modern universalism."

The scene in which Abraham rescues his niece from her sinful mode of life in the play *Abraham* will serve to give a good idea of Hroswitha's dialogue at its best. The monk Abraham has found his niece, Mary, leading a life of sin and has touched her heart. The scene continues:

ABRAHAM: Oh, Mary, think what you have thrown away! Think what a reward you had earned by your fasting, and prayers, and vigils. What can they avail you now! You have hurled yourself from heavenly heights into the depths of hell!

MARY: Oh God, I know it!

ABRAHAM: Could you not trust me? Why did you desert me? Why did you not tell me of your fall? Then dear brother Ephrem and I could have done a worthy penance.

MARY: Once I had committed that sin, and was defiled, how could I dare come near you who are so holy?

ABRAHAM: Oh, Mary, has anyone ever lived on earth without sin except the Virgin's Son?

MARY: No one, I know.

ABRAHAM: It is human to sin, but it is devilish to remain in sin. Who can be justly condemned? Not those who fall suddenly, but those who refuse to rise quickly.

MARY: Wretched, miserable creature that I am!

ABRAHAM: Why have you thrown yourself down there? Why

do you lie on the ground without moving or speaking? Get up, Mary! Get up, my child, and listen to me!

MARY: No! no! I am afraid. I cannot bear your reproaches.

ABRAHAM: Remember how I love you, and you will not be afraid.

MARY: It is useless. I cannot.

ABRAHAM: What but love for you could have made me leave the desert and relax the strict observance of our rule? What but love could have made me, a true hermit, come into the city and mix with the lascivious crowd? It is for your sake that these lips have learned to utter light, foolish words, so that I might not be known! Oh, Mary, why do you turn away your face from me and gaze upon the ground? Why do you scorn to answer and tell me what is in your mind?

MARY: It is the thought of my sins which crushes me. I dare not look at you; I am not fit to speak to you.

ABRAHAM: My little one, have no fear. Oh, do not despair! Rise from this abyss of desperation and grapple God to your soul!

MARY: No, no! My sins are too great. They weigh me down.

ABRAHAM: The mercy of heaven is greater than you or your sins. Let your sadness be dispersed by its glorious beams. Oh, Mary, do not let apathy prevent your seizing the moment for repentance. It matters not how wickedness has flourished. Divine grace can flourish still more abundantly!

MARY: If there were the smallest hope of forgiveness, surely I should not shrink from doing penance.

ABRAHAM: Have you no pity for me? I have sought you out with so much pain and weariness! Oh, shake off this despair which we are taught is the most terrible of all sins. Despair of God's mercy—for that alone there is no forgiveness. Sin can no more embitter His sweet mercy than a spark from a flint can set the ocean on fire.

MARY: I know that God's mercy is great, but when I think how greatly I have sinned, I cannot believe any penance can make amends.

ABRAHAM: I will take your sins on me. Only come back and take up your life again as if you had never left it.

MARY: I do not want to oppose you. What you tell me to do I will do with all my heart.

ABRAHAM: My daughter lives again! I have found my lost lamb and she is dearer to me than ever.

MARY: I have a few possessions here—a little gold and some clothes. What ought I to do with them?

ABRAHAM: What came to you through sin, with sin must be left behind.

MARY: Could it not be given to the poor, or sold for an offering at the holy altar?

ABRAHAM: The price of sin is not an acceptable offering to God.

MARY: Then I will not trouble any more about my possessions.

ABRAHAM: Look! The dawn! It is growing light. Let us go.

MARY: You go first, dearest father, like the good shepherd leading the lost lamb that has been found. The lamb will follow in your steps.

ABRAHAM: Not so! I am going on foot, but you—you shall have a horse so that the stony road shall not hurt your delicate feet.

MARY: Oh, let me never forget this tenderness! Let me try all my life to thank you! I was not worth pity, yet you have shown me no harshness; you have led me to repent not by threats but by gentleness and love.

There is one of Hroswitha's comedies which bears strongly the stamp of the morality plays of a much later period. Its presence among her writings would doubtless mean that this form of dramatic composition is much older than we have been accustomed to think, and that it is only the absence of examples because of failure of preservation that has led us to attribute its origin to a much later date. In this comedy the mother Wisdom and her three daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity, come to Rome in order to influence the citizens and its city for good. The Emperor Adrian hears of their coming, and fearing lest they harm his people inquires about them. He is told by those who do not like them that they are

sure to do harm, and so he has the three daughters arrested in the midst of their good works and thrown into prison. Their mother Wisdom encourages them in every way, and they suffer martyrdom. Forty days later, she herself having viewed with complacency her daughters' martyrdom, is apprehended, and shares their fate. There are other comedies founded on the efforts of the anchorites of old to bring back to the fold young women who had been tempted away from their cloister homes. Always the heroines have taken vows of virginity and always martyrdom is the happy termination of the story.

Hroswitha's comedies were written as an antidote to the pagan literature that she feared was doing harm. Whether they were acted or not we are not sure. She wrote them manifestly to be read. Some of them would be very difficult of presentation, especially in convents; on the other hand some would seem to need the actualization of presentation in order to be properly appreciated. One of them already mentioned, *Dulcitius,* turns on the story of a prefect of the city who resolved to steal away some Christian girls from their home. He knew that it would be idle for him to attempt to meet them during the day for they did not go on the street alone; besides they were, because of their Christian modesty, extremely solicitous of the acquaintances they made, so he went to their home at night. He finds his way into the house through the kitchen, and there stricken with madness imagines that the pots and pans and kettles are fair young women, and he sets about kissing them. During the process he becomes thoroughly begrimed, so that he presents a sorry sight. In the confusion consequent upon his embracing of

the pots and pans the whole family comes on the scene and he has to fly but not before he is recognized and becomes the subject of mockery. When he comes to himself and realizes all the shame that he has brought on himself he resolves to be avenged. He accuses the girls of being Christians, and, as they will not sacrifice to the gods, they receive the crown of martyrdom.

Besides her dramatic literature, however, we have a series of poems in Latin verse from Hroswitha that contains some of the most interesting stories that have come to us from the Middle Ages. For instance, the famous story of Theophilus, who sold his soul to the devil, and who has been the theme of so many writers, has his story also told by Hroswitha. This story is really the source of the *Faust* legend, and has been told in many forms and by many writers at different times. In spite of his name, Theophilus, "Friend of God," his ambition tempted him to sell himself to the devil, but a great saint of the time discovers this and obtains for him the paper that he has signed with his own blood. Another of these old stories is that of St. Agnes. As Hroswitha tells it, it is really the story as we know it best and as it was used by Cardinal Wiseman in "Fabiola." The son of Sempronius, the Prefect of Rome, falls in love with Agnes, a Christian maiden, who has vowed to remain a virgin. When she refuses to marry him she is threatened with exposure, naked before the people, but her beautiful hair miraculously covers her and she is saved from the shame. The Prefect angered at this prevention of his purpose condemns her to be martyred and the sentence is carried out. Besides these poems on subjects that admit of lyrical

treatment there is a third group of the writings of Hroswitha which consist of versified chronicles. These are said to have been undertaken at the request of the Abbess Gerberga, who was about Hroswitha's own age and a close personal friend. The principal of these is the *Carmen de Gestis Oddonis.* This really is in epic form and follows somewhat the model set by Virgil in his story of the doings of Æneas. It sets forth the actual history so closely, however, that it is ranked as an historical authority. Unfortunately nearly half of it has not come down to us. Apparently this work was a source of so much satisfaction that Hroswitha was commissioned to execute a similar purpose for the convent itself, and so we have, at least attributed to her, a poem of nearly a thousand lines *De primordiis coenobii Gandersheimensis,* "The Beginnings of the Convent of Gandersheim." This sums up the history of the convent from early in the eighth century to the year 919. All of these writings are to be found in Migne's "Patrologia," which contains all the writings of distinguished ecclesiastics and religious. Recent editions of Hroswitha's works have also been issued in Germany and France as well as the English edition of her plays in "The Medieval Library" (London, 1923).

ST. HILDEGARDE

One of the most noteworthy women of the Middle Ages whose life runs almost parallel with the twelfth century just as the great outburst of medieval intellectuality was about to manifest itself, was Hildegarde, abbess of the Benedictine nunnery of Disibodenberg in what is now

Rhenish Bavaria. She was on terms of intimate friendship with St. Bernard of Clairvaux and she was also in correspondence with the popes and emperors of her time and was manifestly looked up to as one of the very learned women and deeply thoughtful personalities of that day. The writings by which we know her are on medicine and her two volumes, *Liber Simplicis Medicinæ* and *Liber Compositæ Medicinæ,* "The Book of Simple Medicine" and "The Book of Compound Medicine," are published in Migne's "Patrologia," the great Latin work in many large volumes in which the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and other distinguished authors who had intimate relations with the Church in any way, are brought together.

The first work consists of nine books treating of plants, elements, trees, stones, fishes, birds, quadrupeds, reptiles and metals, and is printed in Migne's "Patrologia" under the title, *Subtilitatum diversarum naturæ, libri novem,* "Nine Books of the Diverse Subtilities of Nature." Hildegarde did not limit herself to the diagnosis and treatment of disease, but has as the background, nascent biology, as it was known at that time including some mineralogy. Hildegarde's second work in five books, treats of the general diseases of the human body and its ailments, of the causes, symptoms and treatment of disease.

These are not small volumes nor are the so-called books which they comprise merely chapters. The first book on plants has 230 chapters; the second on the elements has 13 chapters; the third on trees has 36 chapters; the fourth on various kinds of minerals including precious

stones has 226 chapters, and so on. Each chapter begins with a description of the species in question and then defines its value for man and its therapeutic significance. Modern scientists have not hesitated to declare that the descriptions abound in observations worthy of an inquiring spirit. As in the case of Hroswitha most of what Hildegarde wrote comes to us in a single copy. Of none is there more than four copies, showing how near we came to missing all knowledge of her entirely. She represents a very striking example of the deep intellectual interests of the Benedictine nuns who, after the foundation by Scholastica in the fifth century, had spread throughout Europe just as the Benedictines, the Monks of the West, founded by her brother St. Benedict, had spread everywhere.

Some of Hildegarde's anticipations of modern ideas are indeed surprising enough. For instance, in talking about the stars and describing their course through the firmament she makes use of a comparison that is rather startling. She says: "Just as the blood moves in the veins which causes them to vibrate and pulsate, so the stars move in the firmament and send out sparks as it were of light like the vibrations of the veins." This is, of course, not an anticipation of the discovery of the circulation of the blood, but it shows how close were men's ideas to some such thought five centuries before Harvey's discovery.

For Hildegarde, the brain was the regulator of all the vital qualities, the center of life. She connects the nerves in their passage from the brain and the spinal cord through the body with manifestations of life. She has a

series of chapters with regard to psychology normal and morbid. She talks about frenzy, insanity, despair, dreads, obsessions, anger, idiocy and innocence. She says very strongly in one place that "when headache and migrain and vertigo attack a patient simultaneously they render a man foolish and upset his reason. This makes many people think that he is possessed of a demon, but that is not true." These are the exact words of the saint as quoted by Mlle. Melanie Lipinska in her thesis *Histoire des Femmes Medecins* which she presented for the doctorate in medicine at the University of Paris in 1900.

It is no wonder that Mlle. Lipinska thinks St. Hildegarde the most important medical writer of her time. Reuss, the editor of the edition of Hildegarde published in Migne's "Patrology," says: "Among all the saintly religious who have practised medicine or written about it in the Middle Ages, the most important is, without any doubt, St. Hildegarde. According to the monk, Theodoric, who was an eye-witness, the saint possessed the gift of healing to such a high degree that no ailing person had recourse to her without recovering health. . . ." With regard to her book, he says: "All those who wish to write the history of the medical and natural sciences must read this work in which this religious woman evidently well grounded in all that was known at that time in the secrets of Nature discusses and examines carefully all the knowledge of the time." He adds, "It is certain that St. Hildegarde knew many things that were unknown to the physicians of her time."

Not long since the Oxford University Press published a long monograph consisting of some sixty quarto pages

written by Professor Charles Singer of London, a well-known contributor to the history of medicine and one who has devoted himself particularly to the study of manuscript material. Some of the quotations from St. Hildegarde's works that are translated in that volume will give an excellent idea of her interest in not only medicine but science and how this nun of the twelfth century expressed herself on many and diverse subjects. There is no doubt at all about her genius for comprehension and her power of expression, and, with St. Bernard she was one of the impressive figures who ushered in the great intellectual and artistic period that developed in the thirteenth century.*

Hildegarde's discussion of the powers of the soul and body and their mutual interaction shows what definite ideas she held with regard to a subject that might well be considered to have been vague and shadowy at best. Hildegarde was persuaded that the microcosm or little universe, man, had an essential similarity and relationship with the macrocosm or external cosmos, the universe as it is called. As Dr. Singer has pointed out, without the recognition of this persuasion in Hildegarde it is extremely difficult to understand her system of thought. Hildegarde thought of the brain as having three chambers or divisions corresponding to the three parts of man's nature, an idea encountered in the writings of St. Augustine. Parallel to these there are, she tells us:

"Three elements in man by which he shows life: to wit, soul *(anima)*, body *(corpus)* and sense *(sensus)*. The soul vivifies the body and inspires the senses; the body attracts the soul and

*"Studies in the History and Method of Science" edited by Charles Singer, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1917.

reveals the senses; the senses affect the soul and allure the body. For the soul rules the body as a flame throws light into darkness, and it has two principal powers or limbs, the intellect *(intellectus)* and the will *(voluntas)*; not indeed that the soul has limbs to move itself, but that it manifests itself thereby as the sun declares himself by his brightness. . . . For the intellect is attached to the soul as the arms to the body; for as the body is prolonged into arms with fingers and hands attached, so the intellect is produced from the soul by the operation of its various powers."

At the conclusion of her work when Hildegarde was more than the allotted three score years and ten of the psalmist and when she felt that there was not much longer for her to live here on earth, she expressed her confidence in her faith as a refuge from all the trials and dreads that might come to her:

"And now that I am over seventy years old my spirit according to the will of God soars upward in vision to the highest heaven and to the farthest stretch of the air and spreads itself among different peoples to regions exceeding far from me here, and thence I can behold the changing clouds and the mutations of all created things; for all these I see not with the outward eye or ear, nor do I create them from the cogitations of my heart . . . but within my spirit, my eyes being open, so that I have never suffered any terror when they left me."

CHAPTER X

Medieval Books of Manners

A CHAPTER on the literature relating to medieval manners would seem to most people to be necessarily rather brief since the usual assumption is that there was so little of anything like manners especially in our sense of the word at that time. The surprise is, then, to find that a series of treatises on manners were written at this period in various countries and that England was particularly prolific in them. John Garland, an Oxford man, who had lived in France for many years, wrote a book on manners for English young men and seems to have been a pioneer in this matter though earlier in the thirteenth century, about 1215, Thomasin Zerklaere wrote in German a rather lengthy treatise on this subject of manners. "The Romance of the Rose" has many references to manners which show us how courtesy was cultivated in France. In Italy, Dante's teacher, Bruneto Latini, published his *Tesoretto* which treats of manners and was soon followed by a number of similar works in Italian.

The writer of the "Little Children's Little Book" suggested that courtesy came down from heaven when Gabriel greeted the Blessed Virgin and Mary and Elizabeth met. That represents the spirit that was inculcated by the books on politeness that were popular in the Middle Ages.

The "Little Children's Little Book" represents the set

of instructions supposed to be needed by very young children. They were very much more outspoken in those days than in ours and they used Saxon words about things, where we use longer Latin terms considered less vulgar, but otherwise this set of instructions may very well be used in our day:

THE LITTLE CHILDREN'S LITTLE BOOK

Little children, draw ye near
And learn the courtesy written here;
For clerks that well the Seven Arts know,
Say Courtesy came to earth below,
When Gabriel hailed Our Lady by name,
And Mary to Elizabeth came.
All virtues are enclosed in courtesy,
And vices all in villainy.
Look thy hands be washed clean,
That no filth on thy nails be seen.
Take thou no meat till grace be said,
And till thou see all things arrayed.
Look, my son, that thou not sit,
Till the ruler of the house thee bid.
And at thy meat, in the beginning,
Look on poor men that thou think;
For the full stomach ever faileth
To understand what the hungry aileth.
Eat not thy meat too hastily;
Abide and eat thou easily.
Till thou have thy full service,
Touch thou no mess in no wise.
Carve thou not thy bread too thin,
Nor break it not in twain.
The morsels thou beginnest to touch
Cast them not into thy pouch.
Put not thy fingers in thy dish,
Neither in flesh, neither in fish.

Put not thy meat into the salt,
Into the cellar, that is a fault;
But lay it fairly thee before,
Upon thy trencher, that is good lore.
Pick not thine ears nor thy nostrils;
If thou do, men will say thou come of churls.
And while thy meat in thy mouth is,
Drink thou not—forget not this.
Eat thy meat by small morsels too,
Fill not thy mouth, as churls do.
Pick not thy teeth with thy knife.
In no company begin thou strife.
And when thou hast thy pottage done,
Out of thy dish thou put thy spoon.
Nor spit thou not over the table,
Nor thereupon—that is nothing seemly.
Lay not thy elbow nor thy fist
Upon the table whiles thou eat'st.
Belch not, as a bean were in thy throat,
As a churl that comes out of a cot.
If thy meat be of great price,
Beware of it, or thou art not wise.
Speak no word, nor still nor loud,
And honour and courtesy look thou work.
And at the table look thou make good cheer;
Look thou whisper not in no man's ear.
With thy fingers thou touch not and taste
Thy meat, and look thou do no waste.
Look thou laugh not neither grin;
And with much speech thou may'st do sin.
Meat nor drink look thou not spill,
But set it down, both fair and still.
Keep thy cloth clean thee beforn,
And bear thee so thou have no scorn.
Bite not thy meat, but carve it clean,

Be well aware no drop be seen.
When thou eatest gape not too wide,
That thy mouth be seen on ilk a side.
And, son, beware, I rede, of one thing:
Blow neither in thy meat nor in thy drink.
And if thy lord drink at that tide,
Drink thou not, but him abide;
Be it at even, be it at noon,
Drink thou not till he have done.
Upon thy trencher no dirt must be;
It is not honest as I tell thee.
Nor drink behind no man's back;
For if thou do, thou art to lack.
If cheese come forth, be not too greedy,
Nor to cut thereof too speedy.
Cast not thy bones unto the floor,
But on thy trencher thee before.
Keep clean thy cloth before thee all,
And sit thou still, whatso befall.
Till grace be said unto the end,
And till thou have washen with thy friend.
Let him that worthier is than thou art,
Wash before thee; that is thy part.
And spit thou not in thy basin
My sweet son, that thou washest in.
And arise then up, full soft and still,
And jangle neither with Jack nor Jill.
But take thy leave of the head lowly,
And thank him with thine heart highly,
And all the gentles together the same,
And bear thee so thou have no blame.
Then men will thereafter say:
"A gentleman was here today."
And he that despiseth this teaching,
He is not worthy, without leasing,

Neither at good man's table to sit,
Nor of no worship for to wit.
And therefore, children, for charity,
Love this book though it little be,
And pray for him that made it thus,
That he may be helped by sweet Jesus,
To live and die among his friends,
And never to be cumbered with no
fiends.
And give us grace in joy to be,
Amen, Amen, for charity!

The "Babees' Book" might seem, because of the word "babee" which is the old form for our word baby, to be meant for much younger children. Babee, however, was any young person who had as yet no right to speak for himself and assert his independence. It is like our word infant which, according to its Latin derivation, means one who does not talk. Infant is used legally to signify "non speaker," that is, one who has no right to speak for himself because he is not yet of age. The word baby originally has reference to the babbling of a child or its inability to speak properly. This was extended to mean formal talking and therefore babee referred to anyone under majority. The contents of the "Babees' Book" are not at all as out of date as one might possibly think:

THE BABEES' BOOK

or

A Little Report of How Young People Should Behave

May He who formed mankind in His image, support me while I turn this treatise out of Latin into my common language, that through this little comment all of tender years may receive instruction in courtesy and virtue.

The Book of Facet saith that the Book of Courtesy to

teach the practice of virtue is the most helpful thing in the world, so I will not shrink from this labour or refuse it; but for mine own learning will say something that touches upon the matter.

But oh, young babees, whom blood royal hath endowed with grace, comeliness, and high ability, it is on you I call to know this book, for it were great pity but that ye added to sovereign beauty virtue and good manners. Therefore I speak to you specially, and not to old men expert in governance, decorum, and honest manners, for what need is to give pangs to Hell, joy to Heaven, water to the sea, or heat to fire already hot?

Ah, "bele babees" (good boys and girls), hearken now to my lore.

When you enter your lord's place, say "God speed," and with humble cheer greet all who are there present. Do not rush in rudely, but enter with head up and at an easy pace, and kneel on one knee only to your lord or sovereign, whichever he be.

If any speak to you at your coming, look straight at them with a steady eye, and give good ear to their words while they be speaking; and see to it with all your might that ye chatter not, nor let your eyes wander about the house, but pay heed to what is said, with blithe visage and diligent spirit. When ye answer, ye shall be ready with what ye shall say, and speak "things fructuous," and give your reasons smoothly, in words that are gentle but to the point, for many words are right tedious to the wise man who listens; therefore eschew them with diligence.

Take no seat, but be ready to stand until you are bidden to sit down. Keep your hands and feet at rest; do not claw your flesh or lean against a post, in the presence of your lord, or handle anything belonging to the house.

Make obeisance to your lord always when you answer; otherwise, stand as still as a stone, unless he speak.

Look with one accord that if ye see any person better than yourself come in, ye go backwards anon and give him place, and in nowise turn your face from him, as far forth as you may.

If you see your lord drinking, keep silence, without loud laughter, chattering, whispering, joking or other insolence.

If he command you to sit in his presence, fulfil his wish at once, and strive not with another about your seat.

When you are set down, tell no dishonest tale; eschew also,

with all your might, to be scornful; and let your cheer be humble, blithe, and merry, not chiding as if ye were ready for a fight.

If you perceive that your better is pleased to commend you, rise up anon and thank him heartily.

If you see your lord and lady speaking of household matters, leave them alone, for that is courtesy, and interfere not with their doing; but be ready, without feigning, to do your lord service, and so shall you get a good name.

Also, to fetch him drink, to hold the light when it is time, and to do whatsoever ought to be done, look ye be ready; for so shall ye full soon get a gentle name in nurture. And if you should ask a boon of God, you can desire no better thing than to be well-mannered.

If your lord is pleased to offer you his own cup to drink, rise when you take it, and receive it goodly with both your hands, and when you have done, proffer it to no man else, but render it again to him that brought it, for in nowise should it be used commonly—so wise men teach us.

Now must I tell you shortly what you shall do at noon when your lord goes to his meat. Be ready to fetch him clear water, and some of you hold the towel for him until he has done, and leave not until he be set down, and ye have heard grace said. Stand before him until he bids you sit, and be always ready to serve him with clean hands.

When ye be set, keep your own knife clean and sharp, that so ye may carve decorously your own meat.

Let courtesy and silence dwell with you, and tell no foul tales to another.

Cut your bread with your knife and break it not. Lay a clean trencher before you, and when your pottage is brought, take your spoon and eat quietly; and do not leave your spoon in the dish, I pray you.

Look ye be not caught leaning on the table, and keep clear of soiling the cloth.

Do not hang your head over your dish, or in any wise drink with full mouth.

Keep from picking your nose, your teeth, your nails at meal-time—so we are taught.

Advise you against taking so muckle meat into your mouth but that ye may right well answer when men speak to you.

When ye shall drink, wipe your mouth clean with a cloth, and your hands also, so that you shall not in any way soil the cup, for then shall none of your companions be loth to drink with you. (Drinking cups of silver were passed from hand to hand; hence these careful directions as to cleanliness.)

Likewise, do not touch the salt in the salt-cellar with any meat; but lay salt honestly on your trencher, for that is courtesy.

Do not carry your knife to your mouth with food, or hold the meat with your hands in any wise; and also if divers good meats are brought to you, look that with all courtesy ye assay of each; and if your dish be taken away with its meat and another brought, courtesy demands that ye shall let it go and not ask for it back again.

And if strangers be set at table with you, and savoury meat be brought or sent to you, make them good cheer with part of it, for certainly it is not polite when others be present at meat with you, to keep all that is brought you, and like churls vouchsafe nothing to others.

Do not cut your meat like field-men who have such an appetite that they reck not in what wise, where or when or how ungoodly they hack at their meat; but, sweet children, have always your delight in courtesy and in gentleness, and eschew boisterousness with all your might.

When cheese is brought, have a clean trencher, on which with a clean knife ye may cut it; and in your feeding look ye appear goodly, and keep your tongue from jangling, for so indeed shall ye deserve a name for gentleness and good governance, and always advance yourself in virtue.

When the end of the meal is come, clean your knives, and look to put them up where they ought to be, and keep your seat until you have washed, for so wills honesty.

When ye have done, look then that ye rise up without laughter or joking or boisterous word, and go to your lord's table, and there stand, and pass not from him until grace be said and brought to an end.

Then some of you should go for water, some hold the cloth, some pour upon his hands.

Other things I might commend you to do, but as my time is brief, I put them not into this little report; but overpass them, praying with a spirit that rejoices in this labour, that no man

abuse me; but where too little is, let him add more, and where too much, let him take away, for though I would, time forbids that I say more. Therefore I take my leave, and inscribe this book to every wight whom it may please to correct it.

And, sweet children, for love of whom I write, I beseech you, with very loving heart, that you set your delight upon knowing this book; and may Almighty God that suffered bitter pains, make you so expert in courtesy that through your nurture and your governance you may advance yourselves to lasting bliss.*

Selections from some other books on manners from the medieval period will emphasize the interest of the time in the subject. Here, for instance, are paragraphs from the little book on "How the Wise Man Taught His Son." It is surprising to find this medieval father advising his son not to be anxious to fill official positions because they almost inevitably bring disappointment with them, and warning him not to listen to tale bearers and above all to keep the faith and lead a good life and save his soul:

Listen, lordlings, and ye shall hear how the wise man taught his son. Take good heed to this matter and learn it if ye can, for this song was made with good intent to make men true and steadfast, and a thing well begun makes often a good ending.

There was a wise man taught his son while he was yet a child of tender years, meek and fair to look upon, very eager for learning and with a great desire to all goodness; and his father taught him well and featly by good example and fair words.

He said: "My son, take good heed every morning, ere ye do worldly thing, lift up your heart to God, and pray as devoutly as you can for grace to lead a good life, and to escape sin both night and day, and that heaven's bliss may be your meed.

"And, my son, wherever you go, be not full of tales; beware what you say, for your own tongue may be your foe. If you say

*These extracts are taken from the "Babees' Book, Medieval Manners for the Young," Done Into Modern English From Dr. Furnivall's Texts by Edith Rickert (New York, Duffield & Co., 1908). In this charming little volume a large amount more of material with regard to manners in the Middle Ages will be found.

aught, take good heed where and to whom, for a word spoken today may be repented seven years after.

"And, son, whatever manner of man ye be, give yourself not to idleness, but busy yourself every day according to your estate. Beware of rest and ease, which things nourish sloth. Ever to be busy, more or less, is a full good sign of honesty.

"And, son, I warn you also not to desire to bear office, for then can it be no other than that you must either displease and hurt your neighbours, or else forswear yourself and not do as your office demands; and get yourself, in spite of yourself, here and there, an hundredfold more than thanks.

"And, son, as far as you may, go on no evil quests, nor bear false witness in any man's matter. It were better for you to be deaf and dumb than to enter wrongfully into a quest. Think, son, on the dreadful doom that God shall judge on us at the last!

"And, son, sit not up too long at even, or have late suppers, though ye be strong and hale, for with such outrage your health shall worsen. And of late walking comes strife, and of sitting and drinking out of time, therefore beware and go to bed betimes and wink.

"And, son, if ye would have a wife, take her not for her money, but inquire wisely of all her life, and give good heed that she be meek, courteous and prudent, even though she be poor; and such an one will do you more good service in time of need, than a richer.

"And ye shall not displease your wife, nor call her by no villainous names for it is a shame to you to miscall a woman; and in so doing, ye are not wise, for if ye defame your own wife, no wonder that another should do so! Soft and fair will tame alike hart and hind, buck and doe.

"On the other hand, be not too hasty to fight or chide, if thy wife come to you at any time with complaint of man or child; and be not avenged till you know the truth, for you might make a stir in the dark, and afterwards it should rue you both.

"And look you pay well what you owe, and set no great store by other riches, for death takes both high and low, and then—farewell, all that there is! And therefore do by my counsel, and take example from other men, how little their goods avail them

when they be buried in their graves; and one that was not of his kin hath his wife, and all that there is.*

As a companion picture to "How the Wise Man Taught His Son," we have "How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter." This advice is in verse or rhyme and most of these old books of manners were in rhymed verse. It made it easier for them to be committed to memory and the children were supposed to know them by heart. Mother insists on attendance at church, on charity to the poor, avoidance of gossip, care for reputation and touches upon morals as well as manners. Both father and mother ventured to give advice with regard to matrimony, advice that is as valuable in our day as it was in theirs, though one of the reasons why marriage is often a failure in our time is that their advice is not taken:

Daughter, if thou wilt be a wife,
  Look wisely that thou work;
Look lovely and in good life,
  Love God and Holy Kirk.
Go to church whene'er thou may,
  Look thou spare for no rain,
For best thou farest on that day;
  To commune with God be fain.
    He must needs well thrive,
    That liveth well all his life,
      My dear child.

*What is sometimes called the oldest book in the world, "The Instruction of Ptah-Hotep," is also a letter of advice from a father to his son. Ptah-Hotep was the Vizier of King Itosi in the fifth dynasty in Egypt and wrote this advice to his son about five thousand years ago. The surprise is to find that the subjects touched upon are nearly the same in the fatherly advice given at periods so far apart and when ordinarily it would be presumed that conditions were so different that there could be little similiarity of expression. Manifestly human nature had not changed any in the somewhat more than four thousand years that separate the two fathers' advice in Egypt and in England at the end of the Middle Ages and in spite of the six hundred years that have elapsed since, many a father of our time would be very glad indeed to be able to give his son such good advice as these old fathers did.

Gladly give thy tithes and thy offerings both,
To the poor and the bed-rid—look thou be not loth.
Give of thine own goods and be not too hard,
For seldom is the house poor where God is steward.
Well is he provèd
Who the poor hath lovèd,
My dear child.

When thou sittest in the church, o'er thy beads bend;
Make thou no jangling with gossip or with friend.
Laugh thou to scorn neither old body nor young,
But be of fair bearing and of good tongue.
Through thy fair bearing
Thy worship hath increasing,
My dear child.

If any man offer thee courtship and would marry thee,
Look that thou scorn him not, whatsoever he be;
But show it to thy friends and conceal it naught.
Sit not by him nor stand where sin might be wrought,
For a slander raised of ill
Is evil for to still,
My dear child.

The man that shall thee wed before God with a ring,
Love thou him and honour most of earthly thing.
Meekly, thou him answer and not as atterling (shrew)
So may'est thou slake his mood, and be his dear darling.
A fair word and a meek
Doth anger slake,
My dear child.

CHAPTER XI

The Three Most Read Medieval Books

IN the latter part of the Middle Ages three books were probably more read than any others, that is of course apart from Holy Scriptures, which, contrary to the commonly accepted notion in this matter, were frequently the subject of study and of daily contact in one way or another by all those who could read. These three books were "Reynard the Fox," sometimes called the animal epic, that is the series of stories of the animals so humanized that they are used as a cloak for a satire upon man and his ways; "The Golden Legend" which impressed our American poet, Longfellow, so deeply, that he spent many years making what he hoped might prove for the modern world a bit of the self-revelation that this wonderful old medieval book proved to be for its own and subsequent generations, and finally the "Romance of the Rose" which was probably the most read book of all during the last two centuries of the Middle Ages. Its popularity can well be appreciated from the fact that though Chaucer was widely read there are more than three times as many manuscript copies of "The Romance of the Rose" in existence as of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and "The Romance" was one of the earliest books to be printed.

The story of "Reynard the Fox" is one of the most profoundly humorous books that was ever written. Its satire was aimed at its own time yet it is never for a moment antiquated for the modern reader. At a time when, owing to the lack of recognition of personal rights, it would have been extremely dangerous to satirize as the author does very freely, the rulers, the judges, the nobility, the ecclesiastical authorities and churchmen generally, practically all classes of society, the writer whose name has, unfortunately for the completeness of literary history, not come down to us, succeeded in painting all the foibles of men and pointing out all the differences there are between men's pretensions and their actual accomplishments, without incurring the penalties that seemed inevitable for such license. All the methods by which the cunning scoundrel could escape justice are exploited. The various modes of escaping punishment by direct and indirect bribery, by pretended repentance and reformation, by cunning appeal to the selfishness of judges, are revealed with the fidelity to detail of a modern muckraker; yet, all of it with a humanly humorous quality which, while it takes away nothing from the completeness of the exposure, removes most of the bitterness that probably would have made the satire fail of its purpose. Every class in the community of the time comes in for satirical allusions, that give us a better idea of how closely the men and women of the time resembled those of our own, than is to be found in any other single literary work that has been preserved for us from this century, or, indeed, any other. The series of stories seemed to be scarcely more than a collection of fables for chil-

dren, and probably was read quite unsuspectingly by those who are so unmercifully satirized in it, though doubtless, as is usually noted in such cases, each one may have applied the satire of the story as he saw it to his neighbor and not to himself.

A recent editor has said very well of "Reynard the Fox" that it is one of the most universal of books in its interest for all classes. Critics have at all times been ready to praise and few if any have found fault. It is one of the books that answers well to what Cardinal Newman declared to be at least the accidental definition of a classic; it pleases in childhood, in youth, in middle age and even in declining years. It is because of the eternal verity of the humanity in the book, that with so much truth Froude writing of Reynard can say: "It is not addressed to a passing mode of folly or of profligacy, but it touches the perennial nature of mankind, laying bare our own sympathies, and tastes, and weaknesses, with as keen and true an edge as when the living world of the old Suabian poet winced under its earliest utterance."

The writer who traced the portraits must be counted one of the great observers of all time. As is the case with so many creative artists of the Middle Ages, though this is truer elsewhere than in literature, the author is not known. Perhaps he thought it safer to shroud his identity in friendly obscurity, rather than expose himself to the risks that the finding of supposed keys to his satire might occasion. Too much credit must not be given to this explanation, however, though some writers have made material out of it to exploit Church intolerance, which the conditions do not justify. We are not sure who wrote

the "Arthur Legends," we do not know the author of "The Cid," even all-pervasive German scholarship has not settled the problem of the writer of the "Nibelungenlied," and the authorship of the *Dies Iræ* is in doubt, though all of these would be sources of honor and praise rather than danger. Authors had evidently not as yet become sophisticated to the extent of seeking immortality for their works. They even seem to have been indifferent as to whether their names were associated with them or not. Enough for them apparently to have had the satisfaction of doing, all else seemed futile.

The original of "Reynard the Fox" was probably written in the Netherlands, though it may be somewhat difficult for the modern mind to associate so much of wit and humor with the Dutchmen of the Middle Ages. It arose there about the time that "The Cid" came into vogue in Spain, the Arthur Legends were being put into shape in England, and the "Nibelungenlied" reaching its ultimate form in Germany. Reynard thus fills up the geographical chart of contemporary literary effort for the Middle Ages, since France and Italy come in for their share in other forms of literature, and no country is missing from the story of successful, enduring accomplishment in letters. It was written from so close to the heart of Nature that it makes a most interesting gift book even for the twentieth century child, and yet will be read with probably even more pleasure by the parents. With good reason another recent editor has thus summed up the catholicity of its appeal to all generations:

"This book belongs to the rare class which is equally delightful to children and to their elders. In this regard

it may be compared to 'Gulliver's Travels,' 'Don Quixote' and 'Pilgrim's Progress.' For wit and shrewd satire and for pure drollery both in situations and descriptions, it is unsurpassed. The animals are not men dressed up in the skin of beasts, but are throughout true to their characters, and are not only strongly realized but consistently drawn, albeit in so simple and captivating a way that the subtle art of the narrator is quite hidden, and one is aware only of reading an absorbingly interesting and witty tale."

To have a place beside Gulliver, the old Spanish knight and Christian, shows the estimation in which the book is held by those who are best acquainted with it.

The work is probably best known through the version of it which has come to us from the greatest of German poets, Goethe, whose *Reineke Fuchs* has perhaps had more sympathetic readers and a wider audience than any other of Goethe's works. The very fact that so deeply intellectual a literary man should have considered it worth his while to devote his time to making a modern version of it, shows not only the estimation in which he held it, but also affords excellent testimony to its worth as literature, for Goethe, unlike most poets, was a fine literary critic, and one who above all knew the reasons for the esthetic faith that was in him. Animal stories in every age, however, have been imitations of it much more than is usually imagined. While the author probably obtained the hint for his work from some of the old-time fables as they came to him by tradition, though we have no reason to think that Æsop was familiar to him, and many for thinking the Greek fabulist was not, he added so much to

this simple literary mode, transformed it so thoroughly from child's literature to world literature, that the main merit of modern animal stories must be attributed to him. Uncle Remus, and the many compilations of this kind that have been popular in our own generation, owe much more to the animal epic than might be thought possible by one not familiar with the original medieval work.

The second of the most read books of the Middle Ages was the well-known *Legenda Aurea,* or as it has been called, "The Golden Legend," written by Jacobus or Jacopo de Voragine, the distinguished Dominican preacher and writer (1230-1298). Before the end of his life he was chosen archbishop of Genoa and had always been a leading personality in his time. The book consists of a series of lives of the greater saints of the Church from the time of Christ, and details especially the wonderful things that happened in their lives. Some of these events were dramatic and intensely interesting though many of them comprised marvelous stories difficult to believe. The marvels related proved a special bait for readers and the book maintained its position as a most read book for centuries. It acquired a strong hold on the popular imagination and its stories were retold by preachers and teachers of all kinds.

With all this adventitious interest, however, the book contains a solid fund of information with regard to the lives of the saints. Its popularity is a proof that the taste and inclination of that time was very different from ours. They believed in the Middle Ages that they should be interested in what is best in man rather than in what is worst. They tried very hard to have the good that men do

live after them and let the evil be interred with their bones. Popular biography in our time has become mainly a field for the presentation of all the ill that men have done while in the Middle Ages they dwelt on the good. They were very much interested in knowing all about the lives of those who—to adopt the well-known definition of a saint, as "a person who thinks first of others and only second of himself"—were as unselfish as possible and as thoughtful of others as they could well be. The contrast between the biographic interests at the two periods, on the average nearly a thousand years apart, is so striking as to make it worthy of special note.

Voragine's lives of the saints in "The Golden Legend" had a wealth of interesting stories that poets have turned to for inspiration ever since, and like Geoffrey of Monmouth's legends of King Arthur, deeply influenced succeeding generations. Longfellow in his "Legend of the Monk Felix" has told a typical story out of "The Golden Legend." This will probably give a better idea of some of the interesting material to be found in that work than any amount of description:

LEGEND OF THE MONK FELIX

One morning, all alone
Out of his convent of gray stone,
Into the forest older, darker, grayer,
His lips moving, as if in prayer,
His head sunken upon his breast
As in a dream of rest,
Walked the Monk Felix. All about
The broad, sweet sunshine lay without,
Filling the summer air:
And within the woodlands as he trod,

The dusk was like the truce of God
With worldly woe and care;
Under him lay the golden moss;
And above him the boughs of hoary trees
Waved, and made the sign of the cross,
And whispered their Benedicites;
And from the ground
Rose an odor sweet and fragrant
Of the wild flowers and the vagrant
Vines that wandered,
Seeking the sunshine, round and round.
These he heeded not, but pondered
On the volume in his hand,
Wherein amazed he read:
"A thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night!"
And with his eyes downcast
In humility he said:
"I believe, O Lord,
What is written in thy Word,
But alas! I do not understand!"

And lo! he heard
The sudden singing of a bird,
A snow-white bird, that from a cloud
Dropped down,
And among the branches brown
Sat singing,
So sweet, and clear, and loud,
It seemed a thousand harp-strings ringing.
And the Monk Felix closed his book,
And long, long,
With rapturous look,
He listened to the song,
And hardly breathed or stirred,
Until he saw, as in a vision,

The land Elysian,
And in the heavenly city heard
Angelic feet
Fall on the golden flagging of the street.
And he would fain
Have caught the wondrous bird,
But strove in vain;
For it flew away, away,
Far over hill and dell,
And instead of its sweet singing
He heard the convent bell
Suddenly in the silence ringing
For the service of noonday.
And he retraced
His pathway sadly and in haste.

In the convent there was a change!
He looked for each well-known face,
But the faces were new and strange;
New figures sat in the oaken stalls,
New voices chanted in the choir;
Yet the place was the same place,
The same dusky walls
Of cold, gray stone,
The same cloisters and belfry and spire.

A stranger and alone
Among that brotherhood
The Monk Felix stood.
"Forty years," said a Friar,
"Have I been Prior
Of this convent in the wood,
But for that space,
Never have I beheld thy face!"

The heart of the Monk Felix fell:
And he answered, with submissive tone,
"This morning after the hour of Prime,

I left my cell,
And wandered forth alone,
Listening all the time
To the melodious singing
Of a beautiful white bird,
Until I heard
The bells of the convent ringing
Noon from their noisy towers.
It was as if I dreamed;
For what to me had seemed
Moments only, had been hours!"

"Years!" said a voice close by.
It was an aged monk who spoke,
From a bench of oak
Fastened against the wall:—
He was the oldest monk of all.
For a whole century
Had he been there,
Serving God in prayer,
The meekest and humblest of his creatures.
He remembered well the features
Of Felix, and he said,
Speaking distinct and slow:
"One hundred years ago,
When I was a novice in this place,
There was here a monk, full of God's grace,
Who bore the name
Of Felix, and this man must be the same."

And straightway
They brought forth to the light of day
A volume old and brown,
A huge tome, bound
In brass and wild-boar's hide,
Wherein were written down
The names of all who had died
In the convent, since it was edified.

And there they found,
Just as the old monk said,
That on a certain day and date,
One hundred years before,
Had gone forth from the convent gate
The Monk Felix, and never more
Had entered that sacred door.
He had been counted among the dead!
And they knew, at last,
That such had been the power
Of that celestial and immortal song,
A hundred years had passed,
And had not seemed so long
As a single hour!

The third of the most read books of the later Middle Ages is not so well known except perhaps by scholars as is the animal epic of Reynard or even "The Golden Legend." Anyone who wants to understand the burden of this time and who wishes to put himself in the mood and the tense to comprehend not only the literature, and in this must be included even Dante, but also the educational, cultural and even scientific movements of the period, must become familiar with it. It has been well said that a knowledge and study of the three most read books of this time, as we have named them, will afford a clearer insight into the daily life and the spirit working within the people for whom they were written than the annals of the wars or political struggles that were waged during the same period between kings and nobles.

For this clearer insight, a knowledge of "The Romance of the Rose" is more important than of the others. It provides a better introduction to the customs and habits, the manners of thought and of action, the literary and edu-

cational efforts of the people, than any mere history however detailed could. In this respect it resembles Homer who, as Froude declares, has given us a better idea of Greek life than a whole encyclopedia of classified information might do.

"The Romance of the Rose" continued as we have said for more than two centuries to be the most read book in Europe. Everyone with any pretense to scholarship or to literary taste in any European country considered it necessary to be familiar with it. Without any exaggeration what Lowell once declared with regard to "Don Quixote," that it would be considered a mark of lack of culture to miss a reference to it in any country in Europe, might well have been repeated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of "The Romance of the Rose." It has in recent years been put into very suitable English dress by Mr. F. S. Ellis and published among the Temple Classics, thus placing it within easy reach of English readers. Mr. Ellis must certainly be considered a suitable judge of the interest there is in the work. He spent several years in translating its two and twenty thousand six hundred and eight lines and yet considers that few books deserve as much attention as this typical medieval allegory. He says:

"As to the charge of dulness once made against this highly imaginative and brilliant book, successive English writers, until quite recent times have been content to accept the verdict, though Professor Morley and others have of late ably repelled the charge. If further testimony were necessary as to the falsity of the accusation, and the opinion of one who has found a grateful pastime

in translating it might be considered of any weight, he would not hesitate to traverse the attribution of dulness, and to assert that it is a poem of extreme interest, written as to the first part with delicate fancy, sweet appreciation of natural beauty, clear insight, and skilful invention, while J. de Meun's continuation is distinguished by vigor, brilliant invention, and close observation of human nature. The thirteenth century lives before us."

"The Rose" is written on a lofty plane of literary value, and the fact that it was so popular, speaks well for the taste of the times and for the enthusiasm of the people for the more serious forms of literature. Not that "The Romance of the Rose" is a very serious book itself, but if we compare it with the popular publications which barely touch the realities of life in the modern time, it will seem eminently serious. In spite of the years that have elapsed since its original publication it has not lost all its interest, even for a casual reader, and especially for one whose principal study is mankind in its varying environment down the ages, for it presents a very interesting picture of men and their ways in this wonderful period. Here, as in the stories of "Reynard the Fox," one is brought face to face with the fact that men and women have not changed and that the peccadillos of our own generation have their history in the Middle Ages also. Take, for instance, the question of the too great love of money which is now the subject of so much writing and sermonizing. One might think that at least this was modern. Here, however, is what the author of "The Romance of the Rose" has to say about it:

Three cruel vengeances pursue
These miserable wretches who
Hoard up their worthless wealth: great toil
Is theirs to win it; then their spoil
They fear to lose; and lastly, grieve
Most bitterly that they must leave
Their hoards behind them. Cursed they die
Who living, lived but wretchedly;
For no man, if he lack of love,
Hath peace below or joy above.
If those who heap up wealth would show
Fair love to others, they would go
Through life beloved, and thus would
reign
Sweet happy days. If they were fain,
Who hold so much of good to shower
around
Their bounty unto those they found
In need thereof, and nobly lent
Their money, free from measurement
Of usury (yet gave it not
To idle gangrel men), I wot
That then throughout the land were seen
No pauper carl or starveling quean.
But lust of wealth doth so abase
Man's heart, that even love's sweet grace
Bows down before it; men but love
Their neighbors that their love may prove
A profit, and both bought and sold
Are friendships at the price of gold.
Nay, shameless women set to hire
Their bodies, heedless of hell-fire;

It is after reading a passage like this in a book written in the Middle Ages that one feels the full truth of that expression of the greatest of American critics, James Russell Lowell, which so often comes back to mind with

regard to the works of this time, that to read a classic is like reading a commentary on the morning paper. When this principle is applied the other way, I suppose it may be said, that when a book written in the long ago sounds as if it were the utterance of some one aroused by the evils round him in our modern life, then it springs from so close to the heart of Nature that it is destined to live and have an influence far beyond its own time. "The Romance of the Rose," written seven centuries ago, now promises to have renewed youth in the awakening of interest in our Gothic ancestors and their accomplishments, before the over-praised renaissance came to trouble the stream of thought and writing.

Other passages serve to show how completely the old-time poet realized all the abuses of the desire for wealth, and how much it makes men waste their lives over unessentials, instead of trying to make existence worth while for themselves and others. Here is an arraignment of the strenuous life of business, every line of which is as true for us as it was for the poet's generation:

'Tis truth (though some 'twill little
please)
To hear the trader knows no ease;
For ever in his soul a prey
To anxious care of how he may
Amass more wealth: this mad desire
Doth all his thought and actions fire,
Devising means whereby to stuff
His barns and coffers, for "enough"
He ne'er can have, but hungreth yet
His neighbors' goods and gold to get.
It is as though for thirst he fain
Would quaff the volume of the Seine

At one full draught, and yet should fail
To find its waters of avail
To quench his longing. What distress,
What anguish, wrath, and bitterness
Devour the wretch! fell rage and spite
Possess his spirit day and night,
And tear his heart; the fear of want
Pursues him like a spectre gaunt.
The more he hath, a wider mouth
He opes, no draught can quench his
drouth.

The old poet pictures the happiness of the poor man by contrast and can in conclusion depict even more pitilessly the real poverty of spirit of the man who "having, struggleth still to get" and never stops to enjoy life itself by helping his fellows:

Light-heart and gay
Goes many a beggar by the way,
But little heeding though his back
Be bent beneath a charcoal sack.
They labor patiently and sing,
And dance, and laugh at whatso thing
Befalls, for havings care they nought,
But feed on scraps and chitlings bought
Beside St. Marcel's, and dispend
Their gains for wassail, then, straight
wend
Once more to work, not grumblingly,
But light of heart as bird on tree
Winning their bread without desire
To fleece their neighbors. Nought they tire
Of this their round, but week by week
In mirth and work contentment seek;
Returning when their work is done
Once more to swill the jovial tun.

And he who what he holds esteems
Enough, is rich beyond the dreams
Of many a dreary usurer,
And lives his life-days happier far;
For nought it signifies what gains
The wretched usurer makes, the pains
Of poverty afflict him yet
Who having, struggleth still to get.

The pictures are as true to life in the twentieth century as they were in the Middle Ages. There are little touches of realism in both the pictures, which show at once how acute an observer, how full of humor his appreciation, and yet how sympathetic a writer the author of "The Romance" was, and at the same time reveal something of the sociological value of his work. It discloses what is so easily concealed under the mask of formal historical writing and tells us of the people rather than of the few great ones among them, or those whom time and chance had made leaders of men. It seems long to read but as a recent translator has said, it represents only the file of a newspaper for eighteen months, and while it talks of quite as trivial things as the modern newspaper, the information is of a kind that is likely to do more good, and prove of more satisfaction, than the passing crimes and scandals that now occupy over-anxious readers.

CHAPTER XII

Romance

LOVE stories in our sense of that term are supposed to be modern in origin and above all they are not looked for in the Middle Ages. The old Greeks scarcely reached the idea of love in the modern sense of the term and ordinarily it is presumed that the Middle Ages were so occupied with religious ideas that a love story is almost the last thing in the world that the great majority of people would expect to find in medieval literature. In spite of this very prevalent impression, we have at least one exquisite love story from the later Middle Ages and that one makes it very clear that there must have been others. Since the author has called his story by the generic name of *Chantefable* or *Cante-fable,* that is, "Song Story," a literary form in which the major part of the narrative is in prose but the more delicate passages of the tale are in verse, there can be little doubt that there must have been many others like it.

This is the story of Aucassin and Nicolette, sometimes called in the modern time "The Lovers of Provence." Gaston Paris, the eminent French Romance philologist and professor at the College de France who was made a member of the French Academy some forty years ago, and who is a distinguished authority on this subject, was quite sure that there must have been a whole series of such stories.

The French philologist says that "the very existence of this name (Chante-fable), which the author can hardly have invented, implied that of an entire class of which only this specimen has come down to us."

He suggests as to their mode of publication that these song stories were delivered publicly and were probably performed by several persons together. That inference seems natural from the use of the plural at the beginning of each prose portion: "Then they speak and tell and relate." It is evident, however, that a single minstrel if necessary might take upon himself both the recitation of the prose and the singing of the verses. The rendition of such stories were evidently one mode of entertainment and wandering minstrels went from town to town, and above all, from castle to castle, and made their living by such recitals. The verses were sung to the accompaniment of the *vielle* or large violin. The old hero legends of France had been sung in the same way.

The verse is not rhymed but in the original assonance is very faithfully followed. Assonance is carried only by the last strong vowel while rhyme takes in also the consonants following. Gaston Paris says that the use of assonance in the poem puts its high antiquity beyond doubt and, in any case, hardly permits its origin to be placed later than the close of the twelfth century.

In the preface to the modern French translation of *Aucassin et Nicolette* by Alexandre Bida,* Gaston Paris says:

"The little romance of *Aucassin and Nicolette* long

*"The Lovers of Provence, Aucassin and Nicolette," by Alexandre Bida, translated by Rodney McDonough, New York, 1880.

ago attracted the attention of men of letters. Its first readers were struck by the fresh and youthful passion that animates it, the original form of the story, and the lively movement of its style. Only one manuscript preserves this exquisite work for us: when we think how many risks have threatened that volume with destruction since the close of the thirteenth century, at which date the minstrel's recital passed from an oral to a written form, we perceive the happy chance that enables us still to enjoy the 'sweet songs' and 'fair sayings' of the 'old captive.' If the French manuscript, No. 2168 of the National Library, had not enjoyed a good fortune denied to many other finer books, better fitted for preservation, we should not even have conjectured the existence of *Aucassin and Nicolette;* for no old text mentions it, and there is no other production of our ancient poetry that could give us any idea of it."

There is not the slightest hint as to the authorship of the romance. It is supposed to be a story told by an old prisoner, presumably a former captive of the Saracens, for whom it proved an aid in securing alms enough to live on. After a while the old man's tale was transformed in the mouths of those with more literary inclinations, into the song-story as we have it at the present time. Gaston Paris likes to picture in his fancy our author gaily roaming over the world singing and declaiming the pleasant story that the old prisoner had taught him.

The territory in which the author wandered was probably Champagne and Picardy where he "went making music through the country." "Why, then, is the scene laid in Provence and not in northern France? No doubt

solely on account of its very remoteness and for the sake of the interest that is secured by that." "The hills are always green far away," home keeping is always commonplace and conventional while romance develops at a distance. The author thus prepared his readers for the wanderings of his hero and heroine to the romantic countries of Torelore and Carthage. It is manifest from geographic mistakes that he makes, that the author knew very little about the region in which he puts the setting of the romance, though perhaps he took no pains to be exact in such matters as if it were not expected of him.

The story is of the son of the Count of Beaucaire (though there is no county of Beaucaire) with the title of prince, who falls in love with a pretty slave girl. She had been captured by the Saracens when she was very young and bought from them by a crusading soldier when she was yet a child and was being brought up as his godchild not far from the castle of Beaucaire. Of course the young prince's father and mother would not hear of marriage under the circumstances and Aucassin refused to marry anyone else. In order to prevent complications, the young couple are thrown into prison. Nicolette escapes by knotting her bed sheets and table-cloths together and makes her way to the little window of the dungeon where Aucassin is confined. She tells him that she is going to a distant country and she asks him to forget her. She leaves him, however, "one, the longest of her tresses" —presumably in order to help him to forget her.

While she is talking to Aucassin the sentry on the

castle wall sees her and should have apprehended her but "all the world loves a lover and his lass." Instead he warns her that the town watch is seeking her. In spite of the danger of capture the young folks continue their talk, for they are discussing that ever-interesting question as to which loves the other the more. Aucassin is quite sure that no woman's heart could ever stand loving as his does.

Nicolette escapes across the moat into the forest where curiously enough immediately around the castle are wild beasts of all kinds. She builds for herself a little lodge in the forest decorated with a taste which later makes Aucassin recognize it as her handiwork and puts him on her track. Finally he succeeds in finding her, but immediately afterwards they are captured by Saracen pirates and carried off. She is taken to Carthage where she recognizes that here she was born and brought up in her very early years. It turns out that she is the daughter of the Emperor of Carthage and therefore a very suitable match for the young prince, the son of the Count of Beaucaire. The young people get married and live happily ever after.

It is not so much the story, though that is of eternal interest, for it is the old tale that true love never did run smooth, but it is the way that the author tells it that has made his *chantefable* of the Middle Ages so interesting to the modern time. No one has brought that out more effectively than Gaston Paris in his preface to the French edition of the tale. He said:

"The author's special talent was that of painting details at once real and picturesque, of seizing the virgin jets of feeling in young and innocent hearts, of marking

the tone and flow of familiar intercourse. Wonderful adventures, great battles, distant journeys, were not within his powers. He came upon these in his theme, since that was the taste of his age; but he treated this part of the subject with evident carelessness, even in the beginning of his work. He makes amends for this, by executing those portions which pleased him with surprisingly simple and delicate art. We rarely find in the writings of the Middle Ages, so filled with flat description, impressions rendered with such truth and charm: the mild May night in which Nicolette escapes from prison; the shadow of the old tower within which she crouches while the troop of armed men is coming along the street, gleaming in the moonlight; the flowery bower through which Aucassin looks up at the stars, form pictures full of charming poetry. Again, what more delicately elegant than the description of Nicolette moving on through the garden, lifting her dress because of the dew? What more brilliant than her sudden appearance before the shepherd-lads, lighting up all the wood? What more charming than the flight of the two lovers, when Aucassin, 'holding in his arms his love before him on his saddle-bow,' rides away so free of care through the wide world? All this is not merely seen, but felt and represented by a genuine artist."

The author of "Aucassin and Nicolette" has, however, given not only a charming picture of the background of Nature on which the story was to be seen but, strangely enough for the time, he also was a realist in his depiction of the characters of the people who are brought in contact with the lovers, as well as in the narration of the events

that happen to them during the vicissitudes of their love affair. In discussing these traits of the writer, Gaston Paris has brought out the literary quality of this pioneer romance of more than seven centuries ago:

"With this deep and lively feeling of the beauties of Nature, the author had an eye and ear singularly quick to catch human and every-day realities. The sentinel's kindly heart, the gayety of the shepherds eating their bread on the grass, their uncouthness, the rough mischief of the one readier than the rest to talk, are touched with perfect truth and nicety. The ploughman's talk is quite remarkable: the author with a stroke contrasts his hero's more or less fanciful misfortunes with the real suffering and hard estate of the poor, their resignation next to stupidity, yet full of matter of reflection for the powerful. The ploughman cannot understand why Aucassin should weep, since he is rich; and do not the lower people even now think in the same way? That touch of this rustic's old mother, for whom he feels so true a tenderness, goes straight to the heart; and this is a rare thing in the literature of that age, which so reluctantly leaves the circle of a narrow range of feelings, always the same, and often false, or at least conventional."

Some parts of the story serve to give an excellent idea of the author's literary ability. Here, for instance, is a description of Aucassin himself and of his love for Nicolette:

"The name of the lad was Aucassin; he was comely, tall, and gracious, well-made as to legs and feet, and shapely in body and arms. His hair was flaxen and curly in little ringlets, his eyes changeful and laughing, his color delicately bright, his nose high and well set. And he was so well furnished with all

excellences that there was no bad quality in him: but he was so mightily stricken by love, which conquers every thing, that he would not choose either to be a knight, or to don armor, or to go to tourneys, or to do any thing at all that he ought to do. His father and his mother said to him:

" 'Son, take your arms, bestride your horse, defend your lands, and come to your people's help. If they were to see you among them, they would strike harder for their own bodies and goods, for your land and ours.'

" 'Sire,' answered Aucassin, 'what is it that you tell me? May God never grant me any thing that I ask him, if ever I become a knight, or mount horse and go into the fray where I might strike or take blows, until you have given me Nicolette, my dear sweetheart, whom I love so well!'

" 'Son,' says his father, 'that may not be. Let Nicolette go. She is a captive who was brought from a foreign land. The viscount of this city bought her from the Saracens, and brought her hither. He held her at the font, baptized her, and made her his god-daughter; he will give her one of these days to someone under a knight's degree, and above a squire's, who will gain an honorable living for her. You have nothing at all to do with her; and, if you want to take a wife, I will give you the daughter of a king or a count. There is no so great lord in France who will not give you his daughter if you wish her.'

" 'Good faith, father,' answers Aucassin, 'is there today any rank in this world so high that if Nicolette, my sweet darling, were set in it, she would not find herself worthy of it? Were she Empress of Constantinople or Germany, Queen of France or England, even that would be little enough for her; so noble is she, and worthy, and good, and furnished with all good qualities.' "

We are introduced to Nicolette locked up in a chamber in the highest story of her soldier godfather's home, with an old woman near her to keep guard over her. There is but one very small window that opens on the garden. Her introduction comes very appropriately not in prose but in verse:

Nicolette, then, is in thrall,
In a lofty vaulted hall,
Strongly built, with painting dight,
None the least for her delight.
Near the window sad she cowers,
Down into the garden gazes,
Sees the sweet half-opened flowers,
Hears, within the leafy mazes,
Chirp of birds in shadowed bowers.
Then a lonely orphan soul
Feels herself poor sad Nicole.
"Oh, dear Lord, why am I here?
My cherished care, my Aucassin,
Well you weet I love you merely.
I wis, as true hearts only can,
Your love requites me even as dearly.
They by reason of our love
Cast me in this prison drear
Where I pine my life away.
But, by Mary's Son above,
Here no longer will I stay.
Sure and soon I will go free,
If that may be."

Nicolette escapes while the old woman who was with her was asleep. The description of the escape is an interesting passage, above all since it contains a description also of Nicolette herself. In spite of the fact that she is from Carthage, and Aucassin is supposed to be from Provence they are both flaxen-haired. One might have expected that at least one of them would be the dark type but blondes have always been favorite heroines for the poets:

"She rose up, dressed herself in a fine robe that she had, of cloth of silk, took the bed-clothes and some table-cloths, knotted them together, made as long a rope as she could, fastened it to

the casement-shaft, and let herself slip down into the garden. She took her dress with one hand in front, and with the other behind, and lifted her skirt on account of the dew she saw on the grass, and went on along the garden. She had flaxen hair, curly in little ringlets, and eyes changeful and laughing, and a delicate color, and her nose was prominent and well set, and her lips were redder than cherries and roses in summer-time, and she had small white teeth; and little firm breasts that rounded out her dress as if they were two cocoanuts; and she was so slender in the waist that one might have clasped it in two hands; and the daisies she crushed under her toes, and that sprang up again, looked quite dark compared with her feet and ankles, so fair the damsel was."

That touch about the slender waist that could be clasped in two hands would perhaps have been appreciated better a few years ago than it is at the present time, but that other exquisite little bit that the daisies looked quite dark against her white feet and ankles and above all that when she stepped on them the daisies sprang up afterwards because she was such a fairy creature that she did not crush them, is romance at its highest. She makes straight for the castle in which Aucassin is confined and their meeting is naturally put into verse:

Nicole then in mournful fashion
Close against a buttress crept,
Nor could she refuse compassion,
Listening how her lover wept.
She bespeaks him thus:

"Dear youth,
Fair and noble, valiant lover,
I am fain to tell you truth.
Vain are sighs and tears,—give over
Sore lamenting. What relief
Comes from never-ceasing grief,
Sith you cannot make me wife?

For your kindred and your sire
Threaten me with wrath full dire.
For your sake I must depart,
Seeking foreign lands in flight."

More she says not—severs deft
One, the longest, of her tresses;
Drops it through the dungeon's cleft.
He has seized it with caresses,
Kissed, and pressed it to his heart.
Past that instant of delight,
He renews his tears and ruth
For her, his life.

When Aucassin hears that she is intent on going into a distant land, he pleads with her that she must not for she would surely cause his death. He is quite confident that the first man who sees her would surely want her, and if anyone else should take her for a wife except himself there would be nothing for him to do but to take his life. It is after this that they discuss their mutual love and its proportionate intensity.

Nicolette says: "Aucassin, I do not believe that you can love me as much as you say—but I—I love you more than you love me."

"My faith," says Aucassin, "sweet darling, it is not possible that you should love me as much as I love you. A woman cannot love a man as much as a man loves a woman: for a woman's love is in her eyes and on the point of her bosom and at the tips of her toes; but a man's love is rooted in his heart and cannot go out of it."

And this is what the lovers continue to discuss while in danger of being captured by the town watch or Nicolette's escape reported by the sentinel.

The sentinel's warning to Nicolette because of the romantic element in it, is in verse:

Now the dungeon sentinel
On the topmost wall who stood,
Brave and courteous and good,
Kindly too, has heard full well
All her converse with her lover.
Giving warning, thus he sings,
"Damsel with the smile so tender,
I have hearkened all your speaking
With the youth who, captive lying
For your eyes, is slowly dying.
Harm to you this moment brings.
'Ware the soldiers for your seeking!
Drawn swords with their cloaks they
cover;
They will murder you outright,
Save you 'scape by sudden flight.
So heed aright!"

"Hé," said Nicolette, "may the soul of thy father and thy mother rest in peace, thou who hast so kindly and gently given me warning. Please God, I will hide myself from them, and may He protect me!"

Nicolette's escape across the moat is in verse but her adventures among the shepherds are in prose. They take her for a fairy or a vision of some kind so beautiful she seems to be, and she impresses them so much that when Aucassin comes looking for her there is little difficulty in ascertaining that she has been there.

While Aucassin is seeking her in the forest through which he rides so swiftly that the briars and thorns tore his clothes into rags and the blood flowed from his legs, arms and ribs in more than twenty places, so that one might have followed him by the trail of his blood dropping on the grass, he felt neither pain nor hurt so intent was his thought upon finding the lost Nicolette. In the

midst of this comes the interlude with the plowman which is looked upon as one of the particularly interesting parts of the song story. It is in prose:

"Aucassin wandered the day long in the forest without finding trace of her. And when he saw that evening was coming, he fell to weeping because he had not found his sweetheart. He was riding in an old path grown over with grass, when he met a man, such as I am going to tell you of. He was tall and marvellously ugly and hideous. He wore leggings and shoes of ox-hide, wound about with a coarse string to above his knees. He was muffled in a frieze coat, and leaning on a stout club. Aucassin came all at once on him, and was sore afraid when he suddenly saw him quite close.

"'Good brother, God help you!'

"'God bless you!'

"'Please God, what are you doing here?'

"'What business is that of yours?'

"'Nothing, I only ask you out of civility.'

"'But you, why are you weeping and behaving so sorrowfully? Surely, if I were as rich as you, nothing in the world could make me cry.'

"'Bah! Do you know me?'

"'Yes, I know very well that you are Aucassin, the count's son; and if you will tell me why you are weeping, I will tell you what I am doing here.'

"'Surely, I will very willingly tell you. I came this morning to hunt in this wood. I had the prettiest white greyhound in the world, and I have lost it, and so I weep.'

"'Oh, lord's heart, you cry for a wretched dog! Great fool he who will think much of you, when there is no lord in this country so rich that, if your father should ask him for ten, fifteen, or twenty dogs, he would not gladly give them to him, and think himself lucky. For me, I have a right to weep and lament.'

"'You! and for what, brother?'

"'Sir, I will tell you. I was hired to a rich villein, and I drove his plough with a team of four oxen. Now three days ago a great ill-luck befell me. Of my four oxen I lost the best—Redhide, the best of my team. And I go about hunting him up, and have eaten and drunk nothing these three days; and I dare

not go back to the town because they would clap me in prison, for I have nothing to pay with. All the goods I own in the world I carry on my back. I have a poor old mother; she had but one mattress, and they took that away from under her, and now she lies on bare straw. I am more sorry for her than myself, for goods come and go: if I have lost today I shall win another time. I shall pay for my ox when I am able, and for that I shall not cry a jot. Great fool any one that pities you!'

"'Certainly you are a fine comforter, good brother! How much was your ox worth?'

"'Sir, they ask me twenty pence for it. I cannot beat them down a single doit.'

"'Well, take this; here are twenty pence I have in my purse; buy your ox again.'

"'Sir, great thanks. God bring you to find what you are looking for!'"

Aucassin and the plowman are each so intent on his own loss that neither can appreciate why the other should be so much disturbed. At the same time the author gives more than a hint that the troubles of the rich which they take so seriously are as nothing compared to the troubles of the poor on which their very life may depend and the lives of those who are near and dear to them.

It is by a song that Aucassin sings in the night that the lovers are reunited:

Star that steals from out the night,
Spark amid the moonlight set,
Smiling on me from thy height,
Sure thou hast my Nicolette.
Envious of her beauty bright,
Heaven has snatched her from my sight.

Whatsoe'er may me betide,
Dropt again to earth below,
Grant me Heaven, more kind than now,
Rising, aye with thee to bide.

For, were I a king's own son,
Thou wert peer of such an one,
My sweetest fere.

Nicolette's recognition of Carthage as soon as she lands there is a bit of the psychology of unconscious memory that has special interest for our day. When she landed in Carthage she was so beautiful that the royal court did her great honor and welcomed her joyfully and was quite sure that she must be a right noble lady of high degree, so they asked her who she was:

Nicolette, the vessel leaving,
Touched the beach. And, first of all,
Great was her amaze, perceiving
Fortress, port, and city wall,
The very same a child she knew
When stolen by the pirate crew.
Double thus her cause for grieving.
"How am I the better, sprung
Of so great and noble race,
Kin to princes, even higher,
King of Carthage for my sire,
If some day I bear disgrace,
A slave, a barbarous folk among?
My Aucassin, the thought of thee
Stinging, burning, haunteth me
With so keen and sweet a fire
That for love I near expire.
God, who knows my soul, of grace
Grant I may once more behold thee,
That thy lips may kiss my face,
Once again my arms enfold thee,
O youth so dear!"

When the King of Carthage heard Nicolette speak thus, he threw his arms around her neck.

"Fair sweet friend," said he, "tell me who you are. Do not distrust me."

"Sire, I am the daughter of the King of Carthage. I was carried off when a very little child, as much as fifteen years ago."

Nicolette's one thought is that the discovery that she was well born removes the obstacles to her marriage with Aucassin, but now that she has been rediscovered by her father, the Emperor of Carthage, he wants to give her to a king of the pagans in marriage. Thinking of her love, Aucassin, she stole away by night, stained herself all black and disguised herself as a minstrel. In this guise she was taken aboard a ship and landed in Provence. On shore she went playing through the country until she came to the castle of Beaucaire where Aucassin was. Soon they were united in the house of a viscountess friend. Aucassin was weeping bitterly (the medieval men wept at least as readily as Homer's heroes and did not seem to mind the spectacle they made of themselves) for his Nicolette when the viscountess said to him:

"Aucassin, lament no longer, but come with me, and I will show you the thing you love most in the world; for it is Nicolette, your sweet love, who has come from a far country to find you."

And Aucassin was happy.

Guess if he is blithe and gay,
Soon as Aucassin is 'ware
That his love, the lily-fair,
Bides so little space away!
Not a whit he makes delay;
Light of heart, with step like wings
Towards that lady's palace springs.
Straight he to the chamber hies him,

Finds his dearest love right soon.
She, the instant she espies him,
Springing, flies to his embrace,
Trembling, clinging, half a-swoon,
On his bosom hides her face.
If you question his delight,
Look upon the picture there.
Won again that waist so slender,
Lovely face, and eyes so tender,
Then, with glimpse of morning light,
Wedding her, with ring and rite,
Made her Lady of Beaucaire.
The end is this.

CHAPTER XIII

The Jongleur of Notre Dame

A COLLECTION of naïvely striking miracle stories was made in the thirteenth century by Gautier de Coinci, a monk of the great abbey of San Medard, which was situated near Soissons. Unfortunately this magnificent abbey, once a royal abbey of the Frankish kings, that is under the special patronage of the kings of France, has in the vicissitudes of time almost entirely disappeared so that there is scarcely a trace of it left and even that has probably gone as the result of the Great War. The maker of the collection says that there were so many stories to choose from that he had an embarrassment of riches, to translate the French expression, and could scarcely make up his mind as to which to take and which to leave, for after all there was only a limited collection to be made. He said, "On the faith of my soul, so many pleasing miracles of Our Lady do I find written that I know not the which to choose. Neither have I enough of leisure to take them all. Therefore will I do even as he does who seeks flowers in the meadow, the which is all spring like and bedecked with flowers and who sees all around him so many divers ones, crimson, violet, yellow and dark blue, that he knows not the which to pluck first. In like manner I tell you by our Holy Mother I am much bewildered anent these old-time miracles of Our Lady but since that you desire of me to rehearse yet more of them, that I will

do. But this will I not do word for word nor altogether in order for never should I be ended."

The manuscript from which these stories are taken is in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, and is a magnificent example of the devoted work of the monastic writers of books during the thirteenth century. No amount of time or labor was too much to give to making the volume which contained these stories as beautiful as possible and the manuscript is in every sense of the word a work of art. Each story has an appropriate illustration presented on a background of gold, blue and red, the whole being prefaced by a full page illumination which represents the impression produced on the soul of a fervent worshipper. We can take but one of these stories, perhaps the most characteristic and best known of them all, "The Jongleur of Notre Dame" or "The Tumbler of Our Lady," as an illustration of the series. The editor of a recent edition (Putnam, New York) said in his introduction:

"The miracle stories of the Middle Ages, a time in which religion and daily life went hand in hand, are characterized by special charm and the reader cannot fail to be touched by their tenderness and their naïveté." The story itself will demonstrate how deserved is his favorable appreciation.

OF THE TUMBLER OF OUR LADY

In the "Lives of the Fathers," the matter of which is of profit, a story is told, than which I do not say that none more pleasing has been heard, but this one is not so without worth, that it may not well be told. Now will I tell and rehearse unto you of that which happened to a minstrel.

So much had he journeyed to and fro in so many places, and so prodigal had he been, that he became a monk of a holy

Order, for that he was weary of the world. He wholly relinquished his horses, and clothes, and money, and all that he had, and then he withdrew him from the world, and never more did he wish to return to it. Therefore he entered this holy profession, as has been said, at Clairvaux.

And when that this tumbler who was so graceful, and fair, and comely, and well formed, became a monk, he knew not how to perform any office that fell to be done there. Of a truth, he had lived only to tumble, to turn somersaults, to spring, and to dance. To leap and to jump, this he knew, but naught else, and truly no other learning had he, neither the "Paternoster," nor the "Canticles," nor the "Credo," nor the "Ave Maria," nor aught that could make for his salvation.

And when that he had entered the Order, he saw men high shorn who communicated together by signs, and uttered not a word, and right surely he bethought him that in none other manner were they able to hold discourse. But soon were his doubts ended, for he learnt that speech forsooth was forbidden unto them for penance, wherefore at times they were silent, and thus it likewise happened unto him that ofttimes he himself had to keep silence.

And with such good grace, and for so long time, did he remain silent, that never did he speak the whole day long unless that command was given unto him to speak, so that they oft made merry over it. And he was sore affrighted in their midst, for he knew not what to say, or what to do of all that fell to be done there. And because of this, he was very sad and pensive. And everywhere he saw the monks and the novices each one serving God in such office as he held. He saw the priests at the altars, for such was their office, the deacons at the gospels, and the subdeacons at the epistles. And at the proper time, the acolytes straightway rang the bell at the vigils. One recited a verse, and another a lesson, and the young priests were at the *psalter,* and the novices at the *misereres,* and the least experienced were at the *paternosters,* for in suchwise was their work ordered. And he looked everywhere throughout the offices and the cloisters, and saw hidden in the corners here four, here

three, her two, here one. And he observed each one as closely as he was able. One made lamentation, another wept, and another groaned and sighed. And much did he marvel what ailed them. And at length he said, "Holy Mary, what ails these folk that they deport themselves thus, and make show in this manner of such grief? Much disquieted must they be, it seems to me, when they all with one accord make such great dolour!" And then he said, "Ah, miserable being! By the Holy Mary, what have I said? I trow that they pray God's grace. But, unhappy being that I am, what do I here, when that he who, in his calling, serves God with all his might, is thus enslaved? Never shall I render any service here, for naught can I do or say. Very hapless was I when that I became a monk, for I know not how even to pray aright. I look hither and thither, and naught do I, save to waste time and to eat bread to no purpose. If in this I am found out, I shall be utterly undone. I am a lusty villain, and if I do naught here but eat, I shall be turned out into the fields. Very miserable am I in this high office!"

Then he wept to allay his grief, and truly did he desire to be dead. "Holy Mother Mary," said he, "beseech your sovereign Father of His grace to guide me, and to bestow upon me such wisdom that I may be able to serve both Him and you in such-wise as to be worthy of the food which I eat here, for well know I that now I do wrong."

And when he had thus made lament, he went prying about the Church until that he entered a crypt, and he crouched down nigh unto an altar, and hid himself there as best he could. And above the altar was the image of Our Lady, the Holy Mary. And in nowise did it surprise him that he felt in safety there, and he perceived not that it was God, who well knows how to guide His own, who had led him there.

And when he had heard the bell ring for the Mass, he rushed forth from the crypt all trembling. "Ah!" said he, "I am like unto a traitor! Even now each one is saying his response, and here am I a tethered ox, and I do naught here but browse, and waste food in vain. Shall I therefore neither speak nor act? By

the Mother of God, this will I do, and never shall I be blamed for it. I will do that which I have learnt, and thus, after mine own manner, will I serve the Mother of God in her Church. The others do service with song, and I will do service with tumbling."

And he took off his habit, and then stripped himself and laid his garments beside the altar, but so that his body should not be uncovered, he kept on a tunic, the which was very clinging and close fitting. Little better was it than a shift; nevertheless was his body wholly covered. And thus was he fitly clad and equipped, and he girded his tunic, and duly prepared him, and he turned him to the image, and gazed on it very humbly. "Lady," said he, "this is an honest performance. I do this not for mine own sake, so help me God, but for yours, and above all for the sake of your Son, and truly do I here declare unto you, that but little pleasure have I in it, save that I serve you, and thus acquit myself. The others serve, and I serve also. Do not despise your servant, for I serve you for your diversion. Lady, you are the *Monjoie* (my source of joy) which all the world proclaims."

Then he threw up his feet, so that no longer were they on the ground, and he went to and fro on his hands and twirled his feet, and wept. "Lady," said he, "I do homage to you with my heart, and my body, and my feet, and my hands, for naught beside this do I understand. Now would I be your gleeman. Yonder they are singing, but I am come here to divert you. Lady, you who can protect me, for God's sake do not despise me." Then he beat his breast, and sighed, and mourned very grievously that he knew not how to do service in other manner. And then he turned a somersault backwards. "Lady," said he, "so help me God, never before have I done this. Lady! How that one would have his utmost desire, who could dwell with you in your right glorious mansion! For God's sake, Lady, receive me there. I do this for your sake, and in nowise for mine own." Then he again turned the somersault of Metz, and tumbled and capered full many a time.

And when he heard the monks celebrating, he began to exert

himself, and so long as the Mass endured, he ceased not to dance, and to jump, and to leap, until that he was on the point to faint, and he could not stand up, and thus he fell to the ground, and dropped from sheer fatigue. And like as the grease issues from the spitted meat, so the sweat issued from him all over, from head to foot. "Lady," said he, "no more can I do now, but of a surety I shall come back again."

And he was quite overcome of heat. And he took up his clothing, and when that he was dressed, he took his leave and he bowed to the image, and went his way. "Farewell, very gentle friend," said he. "For God's sake, grieve not at all, for if that I am able, and it is permitted unto me, I will come back, for each hour would I serve you to the utmost of my power, so gracious are you." And then he retired, gazing at the image. "Lady," said he, "what great pity is it that I know not all those psalters! Fain would I desire to know them for love of you, very gentle Lady. To you I commend my body and my soul."

And longwhiles he led this life, and, at each hour precisely, he repaired to the image, to render service and homage. Certes, so greatly did it please him, and with such right good will did he do this, that never a day was he so tired that he could not do his very utmost to delight the Mother of God, and never did he desire to do other service.

Well known was it that he went each day into the crypt, but no one, save God, knew what he did there, nor would he, for all the riches of the whole world, that any, save the supreme God alone, should know of his doings. Of a truth, fully did he believe that whensoever this should become known, then would he be driven out thence, and he would be sent back to the world, the which was all overrun of sinners, and rather would he be dead than ever again be the companion of sinners. But God, who knew his purpose and his very great compunction, and the love which moved him to it, would not that his deeds should be hidden, but willed and suffered that the service the which her lover had rendered to His Mother, should be known and made manifest, to the end that every one should know and

understand and perceive that God refuses no one who lovingly labours for Him, in whatsoever manner it may be, provided he loves God and does right.

Think you now that God would have prized his service if that he had not loved Him? By no means, however much he tumbled. But He prized it because of his love. Much labour and fatigue, many fasts and vigils, many tears and sighs and groans and prayers, much diligence in discipline, both at Mass and at matins, the bestowal of all that you have, and the payment of whatsoever you owe, if you love not God with all your heart, all these are wholly thrown away in such manner, understand well, that they avail naught for true salvation. Of a truth, without love and without pity, before God all counts for naught. God asks not for gold or for silver, but only for true love in the hearts of men, and this one loved God truly. And because of this, God prized his service.

Longwhiles did the good man live thus, but for how long time he so lived contented, I cannot tell unto you, but in the course of time sore trouble came to him, for one of the monks, who in his heart greatly blamed him that he came not to matins, kept watch on him. And he much marvelled what happened, and said that never would he desist until that he knew who he was, and for what he was worth, and in what manner he earned his bread. And so closely did the monk pursue him, and follow him, and keep watch on him, that he distinctly saw him perform his service in a simple manner, even as I have told it unto you. "By my faith," said he, "he has a good time of it, and much greater diversion, it seemeth to me, than we have all together. Whiles that the others are at prayer, and at work in the house, this one dances with as much vigour as if he had an hundred silver marks. Right well does he perform his service, and in this manner he pays for us that which is his due. A goodly proceeding, this, forsooth! We sing for him, and he tumbles for us! If we weep, he soothes us! I would that all the convent could see him at this very moment just as I do, even if I had to fast for it till dusk! Not one would there be, methinks, who would be able to restrain his laughter if that he

witnessed the tumbling of this fellow, who thus kills himself, and who so excites him by tumbling, that he has no pity on himself. God counts it unto him for penance, for he does it without evil intent, and, certes, I hold it not to be ill, for, as I believe, he does it, according to his lights, in good faith, for he wishes not to be idle."

And the monk saw how that he laboured without ceasing all the day long. And he laughed much, and made merry over the matter, but it caused him sorrow as well as merriment. And he went to the abbot, and rehearsed unto him, from beginning to end, all that he had learnt, even as you have heard it.

And the abbot arose, and said to the monk, "On your vow of obedience, I command that you keep silence, and noise this not abroad, and that you so well observe this command, that you speak not of this matter save to me alone, and we will both go thither, and we shall see if this can be, and we will beseech the heavenly King, and His very gentle and dear Mother, who is so precious, and of so great renown, that she, of her sweetness, will go pray of her Son, her Father, and her Lord, that if it so pleases Him, He will this day suffer me to witness this service in such sort that God may be the more loved on account of this, and that, if thus it pleases Him, the good man may not be found worthy of blame for it."

And then they went thither quite quietly, and without delay they hid themselves in a covert nook nigh unto the altar, so that he saw them not. And the abbot, watching there, observed all the service of the novice, and the divers somersaults the which he turned, and how that he capered, and danced, and bowed before the image, and jumped, and leaped, until that he was nigh fainting. And so greatly was he overcome of fatigue, that he fell heavily to the ground, and so exhausted was he, that he sweated all over from his efforts, so that the sweat ran all down the middle of the crypt. But in a little, the Mother of God, whom he served all without guile, came to his succour, and well knew she how to aid him.

And anon the abbot looked, and he saw descend from the vaulting so glorious a Lady, that never had he seen one so fair

or so richly crowned, and never had another so beautiful been created. Her vesture was all wrought with gold and precious stones, and with her were the angels and the archangels from the heavens above, who came around the tumbler, and solaced and sustained him. And when that they were ranged around him, he was wholly comforted, and they made ready to tend him, for they desired to make recompense unto him for the services the which he had rendered unto their Lady, who is so precious a gem. And the sweet and noble Queen took a white cloth, and with it she very gently fanned her minstrel before the altar. And the noble and gracious Lady fanned his neck and body and face to cool him, and greatly did she concern herself to aid him, and gave herself up to the care of him; but of this the good man took no heed, for he neither perceived, nor did he know, that he was in such fair company.

And the holy angels who remained with him paid him much honour, but the Lady no longer sojourned there, and she made the sign of the Cross as she turned away, and the holy angels, who greatly rejoiced to keep watch over their companion, took charge over him, and they did but await the hour when God would take him from this life, and they might bear away his soul.

And full four times did the abbot and the monk witness, without hindrance, how that each hour he went there and how that the Mother of God came there to aid and succour her liegeman, for well knows she how to protect her own. And the abbot had much joy of it, for very desirous had he been to know the truth concerning it. Now had God verily shown unto him that the services the which this poor man rendered were pleasing unto Him. And the monk was quite bewildered by it, and from anguish he glowed like fire. "Your mercy, Sire!" said he to the abbot, "this is a holy man whom I see here. If that I have said aught concerning him that is evil, it is right that my body should make amends for it. Therefore ordain me a penance, for without doubt he is altogether an upright man. Verily have we seen all, and no longer can we be mistaken."

And the abbot said, "You speak truly. God has indeed made

us to know that He loves him with a very great love. And now I straightway give command unto you that, in virtue of obedience, and so that you fall not under condemnation, you speak to no one of that which you have seen, save to God or to me."

"Sire," said he, "to this do I assent."

And at these words they departed, and no longer did they stay in the crypt, and the good man did not remain, but when that he had done all his service, he clothed himself again in his garments, and went to divert himself in the monastery.

And thus passed the time, until that, a little while after, it came to pass that the abbot sent for him who was so good. And when he heard that he was sent for, and that it was the abbot who made enquiry for him, so greatly was he troubled, that he knew not what he should say. "Alas," said he, "I am found out. Never a day passes without distress, or without toil or disgrace, for my service counts for naught. Methinks it is not pleasing unto God. Alas! as the truth has been found out, I bethink me that it is displeasing unto Him. Can I conceive that these tricks, the which I do, could give pleasure to the Supreme God if that I did them openly? No pleasure would they give Him. Alas! I never do right. What shall I do, and what shall I say? Blessed and very dear God, what will become of me? Now shall I be rebuked and put to shame, and I shall be banished hence, and shall again become like unto a target for all the ill-treatment of the world without. Gentle Lady, Holy Mary, how troubled is my mind! I know not, Lady, from whom to get counsel, so come now to mine aid. Very dear God, help me now. Tarry not, but hasten, and bring with you your Mother. Of your mercy, come not without her, and do you both come to aid me, for verily I know not of myself how to plead my cause. And at the first word, anon they will say, Away with you! Woe is me! How shall I be able to make answer when I know not one single word with the which to make explanation? But what avails this? It behooves me to go."

And weeping, so that his face was all wet, he came before the abbot, and he knelt before him in tears. "Sire," said he, "for

God's sake, have mercy! Would you drive me hence? Tell me all your behests, and all your bidding will I do."

Then said the abbot, "This would I know, and I would that you answer me truly. Longwhiles have you been here, both winter and summer, and I would know by what services, and in what manner, you earn your bread."

"Alas," said he, "well knew I that all would become known, and that when all my doings were known, no longer would any one have to do with me. Sire," said he, "now will I depart hence. Miserable am I, and miserable shall I be, for I never do aught that is right."

Then the abbot made answer, "Never have I said this, but I pray and demand of you, and further I command you, that, in virtue of obedience, you wholly reveal unto me your thoughts, and tell unto me in what manner you serve us in our monastery."

"Sire," said he, "this will be my death! This command will kill me."

Then he straightway unfolded unto him, howsoever grievous it was, his whole life, from beginning to end, in such sort that he left naught unsaid, just as I have told it unto you. And with clasped hands, and weeping, he told and rehearsed unto him everything, and, sighing, he kissed his feet.

And the holy abbot turned to him, and, all weeping, raised him up. And kissed both his eyes. "Brother," said he, "be silent now, for truly do I promise unto you that you shall be at peace with us. God grant that we may have your fellowship so long as we are deserving of it. Good friends shall we be. Fair, gentle brother, pray for me, and I will pray in return for you. And so I beseech and command of you, my sweet friend, that you forthwith render this service openly, just as you have done it, and still better even, if that you know how."

"Sire," said he, "are you in good earnest?"

"Yea, truly," said the abbot, "and I charge you, on pain of penance, that you no longer doubt it."

Then was the good man so very joyous, so the story relates, that he scarce knew what he did. But despite himself, he was

constrained to rest, for he had become all pale. And when that he was come to himself again, he was so overcome of joy, that he was seized with a sickness, of the which in a short space he died. But very cheerfully did he perform his service without ceasing, morning and evening, by night and by day, so that not an hour did he miss, until that he fell ill. Then verily such great sickness laid hold upon him that he could not move from his bed. But that which distressed him the most, since never did he make complaint of his sufferings, was that he could not pay for his sustenance, for the which he was much troubled in mind, and moreover he feared that his penance would be in vain, for that he did not busy himself with such service as was his wont, and very deserving of blame did he seem unto himself to be.

And the good man, who was so filled with anguish, besought of God that He would receive him before that more shame came unto him. For so much grieved was he that his doings were become known, that he could not endure it. And he was constrained to lie down forthwith.

And greatly did the holy abbot hold him in honour, and he and his monks went each hour to chant beside his bed, and such great delight had he in that which was sung to him of God that in nowise did he long for Poitou, so much did it pleasure him to learn that all would be pardoned unto him. And he made a good confession and repentance, but nevertheless he was fearful. And, as I have told unto you, at last it came to pass that he died.

And the abbot was there, and all his monks, and the novices and good folk, who kept watch over him very humbly, and quite clearly did they see a right wondrous miracle. Of a truth they saw how that, at his death, the angels, and the Mother of God, and the archangels, were ranged around him. And there, also, were the very evil and cruel and violent devils, for to possess them of his soul, and no fancy is this. But to no purpose had they so long lain in wait for him, and striven so earnestly for him and pursued him, for now no power had they over his soul. And forthwith his soul quitted his body, but in nowise was it

lost, for the Mother of God received it. And the holy angels who were there sang for joy, and then they departed, and bare it to heaven, and this was seen of all the monks, and of all the others who were there.

Now they wholly knew and perceived that God willed it that the love of His good servant should no longer be hid, and that all should know and perceive his goodness, and they had great joy and great wonderment of it, and much honour did they pay to his body, and they carried it into the Church, and heartily did they celebrate the service of God. And they buried him with honour in the choir of the mother-church.

With great honour did they bury him, and then, like some saintly body, they kept watch over him. And anon, without concealing aught, the abbot told unto them all his doings, and his whole life, and all that he had seen in the crypt, even as you have heard it. And eagerly did the monks listen unto him. "Certes," said they, "well may it be believed. It cannot be misdoubted, for the truth bears witness to it. Fully is the matter proven, and certain is it that he has done his penance." And greatly did they rejoice together there.

Thus died the minstrel. Cheerfully did he tumble, and cheerfully did he serve, for the which he merited great honour, and none was there to compare unto him.

And the holy Fathers have related unto us that it thus befell this minstrel. Now let us pray God, without ceasing, that He may grant unto us so worthily to serve Him, that we may be deserving of His love. It is for this that the story of the Tumbler is set forth.

CHAPTER XIV

Gesta Romanorum

UNDER this title, *Gesta Romanorum,* "Deeds of the Romans," a popular collection of stories in Latin compiled perhaps originally in England at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, was the favorite light reading of a great many educated people. Doubtless they used to be read in the monasteries in the recreation hour or sometimes during meals to replace more serious spiritual works. Henry Morley in his "English Writers" (volume III, page 364) gives an excellent résumé of all that is known about this collection of stories:

"Preaching by example, with help of good stories to keep the attention fixed, was at this time customary. The very early use of metrical paraphrase of Scripture, and, by the miracle play, of living representations by the priests, within the church, of facts in sacred history told in the lessons of the day, testified to a sense of the need of liveliness in teachers who desired to drive instruction home. The Franciscans and Dominicans in carrying their doctrine to the poor may have improved the art of illustrating sermons with tale and anecdote and legend. And now, in the *Gesta Romanorum,* we have a story-book with its tales arranged, according to their moral or spiritual application, like the hymns in a modern hymn book, for the use of preachers and enlivenment of congre-

gations. The French Dominican, Vincent of Beauvais, tells in his 'Mirror of History' that in his time—the thirteenth century—it was the practice of preachers to rouse languid hearers by quoting fables out of Æsop, and he recommends a sparing and discreet use of profane fancies in discussing sacred subjects. Among the Harleian manuscripts* is an ancient collection of two hundred and fifteen stories—romantic, allegorical, and legendary—compiled by a preacher for the use of monastic communities. In 1389 there appeared at Paris a system of divinity, translated afterwards by Caxton as 'The Court of Sapyence,' crowded with historical examples, parables, and fables. Other such ancient collections are to be found; but the favourite compilation of this kind was the Latin story-book known as the *Gesta Romanorum*.

"This compilation long retained its popularity; was printed as early as 1473; reprinted at Louvain a few months later; again in 1480; translated into Dutch in 1484; printed again in 1488; and went through six or seven editions in this country [England] during the succeeding century. The earliest printed Latin texts contained one hundred and fifty or one hundred and fifty-one sections. In the next following editions the number quickly rose to one hundred and eighty-one, and these one hundred and eighty-one tales form the commonly received text. There was a German edition at Augsburg in 1489 containing only ninety-five tales, of which some are not in the accepted Latin version. In like manner, including tales not in the Latin text, there is an English series

*The collection of manuscripts made by the earls of Oxford and Mortimer (1666-1741) Robert and Edward Harley, now in the British Museum, London.

of forty-three or forty-four sections. In an anonymous comedy, called 'Sir Giles Goosecap,' acted by the children of the Royal Chapel in 1606, one of the persons says, 'Then for your lordship's quips and quick jests, why *Gesta Romanorum* were nothing to them'; and in George Chapman's 'May Day,' a comedy printed in 1611, of a man of high taste according to the time it is said, 'One that has read "Marcus Aurelius," *Gesta Romanorum,* "The Mirrour of Magistrates," etc., to be led by the nose like a blind bear that has read nothing.' "

In spite of all the careful research that has been made on the subject, there is not yet the slightest hint as to who the original author was. The earliest known manuscript is of the year 1326. Some of the tales undoubtedly had been told long before that and the first shaping of the work probably occurred during the thirteenth century. Good authorities believe, but confess that they cannot be sure, that the original author was an Englishman.

The name of the work, *Gesta Romanorum,* "Deeds of the Romans," might very well be expected to apply to definite records of the history of Rome. The title, however, is justified by little more than the arbitrary but not invariable reference as Mr. Morley says of tale after tale to the life or reign of Roman emperors, ancient or modern. It would be expected that the references would be mainly to classical times but emperors of the West, Conrad or Frederick or Henry II, are looked upon as Roman emperors, and tales regarding them come under the title with supposed appropriateness. The book itself sets up the claim, as it were, of being a sort of annals of Rome. There is, however, very little of history in most of the

stories. One tale, to illustrate "the sin of pride," begins with the sentence: "We read in the *Gesta Romanorum* of a prince called Pompeii," and then proceeds to tell about the feud between Cæsar and Pompey and their deaths, adding a moral in the usual form.

Some of the tales had nothing Roman about them and all that was necessary was to have a story and its application. Tales from the East were added and especially those from the *Clericalis Disciplina,* a Latin dialogue professedly borrowed from the Arabian fabulists. On the other hand there are also citations from Ovid in the *Gesta Romanorum* as well as references to Valerius Maximus, Macrobius, Aulus Gellius, Pliny, Seneca and Boethius. The curious thing about it is that the matter attributed to these authors is not always to be found in their works and when found it never occurs in quite the form given to it by the story teller.

The contents of the collection are classed under such heads as "Of Love"; "Of Mercy"; "Of Following Reason"; "Of Bad Example"; "Of Avoiding Imprecations"; "Of Constancy"; "Of the Cunning of the Devil." Very frequently a tale has a King or an Emperor in it and the application by which it is turned into spiritual allegory opens usually with, "My belovèd, the Emperor is God," or, "My belovèd, the King is Christ." This portion of the story always began with "Carissimi" (My belovèd) as the preacher's usual form of address to his hearers indicating that it was a sermon.

The Christian Church, following the example of its Lord and Master, always continued to encourage the use of allegory so that it is not surprising to find this appli-

cation of it in such documents as the *Gesta Romanorum.* The people were very much interested in the stories and they remembered the application of them and the lessons derived from them much better than they would direct explanations of principles. It was undoubtedly the popularity of such allegorized tales as the *Gesta* that led to their continued employment all during the Middle Ages. An example of these tales gives the best possible idea of what they were like.

One of the most striking stories in the *Gesta Romanorum* is that which is known as "The Hermit and the Angel." It may be taken as a typical example of the tales in the volume. John Fiske, the American historian, but also well known as a writer on scientific subjects, in his volume, "Through Nature to God," which is a contribution to the reconciliation of the theory of evolution with faith in Christianity, introduces in the section on "The Mystery of Evil in the World," the story of the hermit and the angel with the sentence: "The simple-hearted monks of the Middle Ages understood in their own quaint way that God's methods of governing this universe are not always fit to be imitated by His finite creatures." At the end of the chapter in which the story is quoted, he says:

"I suspect that with all our boasted science there is still much wisdom for us in the humble childlike piety of the *Gesta Romanorum.* To say that the ways of Providence are inscrutable is still something more than an idle platitude, and there is still room for the belief that could we raise the veil that shrouds eternal truth we should see

that behind Nature's cruelest works there were secret springs of divinest tenderness."

This story of "The Hermit and the Angel" fully justifies these expressions of Fiske and the principal idea that it conveys has been the underlying subject of many stories by novelists and moralists since its original presentation more than seven hundred years ago:

THE HERMIT AND THE ANGEL

There once lived a hermit who in a remote cave passed day and night in God's service. Not far from his cell there was a flock kept by a shepherd, who one day fell into a deep sleep, when a robber, seeing him careless, carried off his sheep. When the keeper awoke he began to swear in good set terms that he had lost his sheep; and where they were gone to he knew not. But the lord of the flock bade him be put to death. This gave to the hermit great offence. "Oh, Heaven," said he to himself, "seest thou this deed? The innocent suffers for the guilty; why permittest thou such things? If thus injustice triumph, why do I remain here? I will again enter the world and do as other men do."

And so he left his hermitage, and went again into the world; but God willed not that he should be lost; an angel in the form of a man was sent to join him. And so, crossing the hermit's path, he said to him, "Whither bound, my friend?" "I go," said he, "to yonder city." "I will go with you," replied the angel; "I am a messenger from heaven, come to be your companion on the way."

So they walked on together to the city. When they had entered, they begged for the love of God harbourage during the night at the house of a certain soldier, who received them cheerfully, and entertained them nobly. The soldier had an only and most dear son lying in the cradle. After supper their bedchamber was sumptuously adorned for them; and the angel and the hermit went to rest. But about the middle of the night the angel rose and strangled the sleeping infant. The hermit, horror-struck at what he witnessed, said within himself, "Never can this be an angel of God; the good soldier gave us every-

thing that was necessary; he had but this poor innocent, who is now strangled." Yet he was afraid to reprove him.

In the morning both arose and went forward to another city, in which they were honorably entertained at the house of one of the inhabitants. This person had a rich gold cup which he highly valued, and of which, during the night, the angel robbed him. But still the hermit held his peace, for great was his fear.

On the morrow they went forward; and as they walked they came to a certain river, over which was a bridge; they went on the bridge, and about midway a poor pilgrim met them. "My friend," said the angel to him, "show us the way to yonder city." The pilgrim turned, and pointed with his finger to the road they were to take; but as he turned, the angel seized him by the shoulders and hurled him into the stream below. At this the terror of the hermit became greater. "It is the devil," he said to himself—"it is the devil, and no good angel! What evil has the poor man done that he should be drowned?"

He would now have gladly gone alone, but was afraid to speak his mind. About the hour of vespers they came to a city, in which they again sought shelter for the night; but the master of the house where they applied sharply refused it. "For the love of heaven," said the angel, "give us shelter, lest we fall prey to the wolves." The man pointed to a sty. "That," said he, "has pigs in it; if it please you to lie there you may—but to no other place will I admit you." "If we can do not better," said the angel, "we must accept your ungracious offer." They did so; and next morning the angel, calling their host, said, "My friend, I give you this cup;" and he gave him the gold cup he had stolen. The hermit, more and more amazed at what he saw, said to himself, "Now I am sure this is the devil. The good man who received us with all kindness, he despoiled, and now he gives the plunder to this fellow, who refused us a lodging."

Turning therefore to the angel he cried, "I will travel with you no more. I commend you to God." "Dear friend," the angel said, "First hear me, and then go thy way."

The Explanation

"When thou wert in thy hermitage, the owner of the flock unjustly put to death his servant. True it is, he died innocently, and therefore was in a fit state to enter another world. God permitted him to be slain, foreseeing that if he lived he would commit a sin, and die before repentance followed. But the

Albert the Great

guilty man who stole the sheep will suffer eternally, while the owner of the flock will repair, by alms and good works, that which he ignorantly committed. As for the son of the hospitable soldier whom I strangled in the cradle, know that before the boy was born he performed numerous works of charity and mercy; but afterwards grew parsimonious and covetous, in order to enrich the child, of which he was inordinately fond. This was the cause of its death; and now its distressed parent is again become a devout Christian. Then for the cup which I purloined from him who received us so kindly, know that before the cup was made, there was not a more abstemious person in the world; but afterwards he took such pleasure in it, and drank from it so often, that he was intoxicated twice or thrice during the day. I took away the cup, and he has returned to his former sobriety. Again, I cast the pilgrim into the river, and know that he whom I drowned was a good Christian, but had he proceeded much further he would have fallen into a mortal sin. Now he is saved, and reigns in celestial glory. Then that I bestowed the cup upon the inhospitable citizen, know nothing is done without reason. He suffered us to occupy the swine-house, and I gave him a valuable consideration. But he will hereafter reign in hell. Put a guard, therefore, on thy lips, and detract not from the Almighty, for He knoweth all things." The hermit, hearing this, fell at the feet of the angel, and entreated pardon. He returned to his hermitage, and became a wiser, better Christian.

CHAPTER XV

Philosophic Prose

IT might readily be presumed that with the classics in eclipse to a very great extent, the prose of the Middle Ages, and especially whatever of it was devoted to the expression of philosophic thought, would suffer from the loss of the example of the closely knit style of the Greek and Roman philosophers and orators. The Fathers of the Church, however, furnished some excellent examples of philosophic prose of good caliber and of straightforward expression of thought. All during the Middle Ages they continued to be read widely and often copied in the monasteries so that they were available for all who were students. Many forget or perhaps have never known how well the Fathers of the Church could write on serious, intricate subjects and how thoroughly they could express themselves with regard to recondite subjects which required not only deep thinking but careful choice of words to express the exact meaning they were trying to convey.

The homilies of St. Ambrose, though sometimes concerned with abstruse problems of theology, oftener however, with the simple practical application of the Gospel, to the affairs of everyday life, are striking examples of simple prose that were to be incentives to similar writing during the medieval period. St. Jerome's contribution to similar influence over the minds of his fellow Christians

in subsequent centuries was the Vulgate, his translation of the Bible into the Latin tongue in a form that has made it a classic ever since. It did more to form the style of the writers of the Middle Ages than any other book. As they did not quote verbatim from it, as we are accustomed to do, it is sometimes very difficult to know where the biblical citation begins and where it ends. Some of the medieval writers knew their Bible so well that clauses and sentences from it were constantly finding their way into their prose writings. Cardinal Newman in "Callista" puts into the hands of the heroine of his story, who has been thrown into prison during the persecutions in North Africa on suspicion of being a Christian, a copy of the Gospel of St. Luke. She was attracted to it at first more from its literary flavor than the unction of the story of Christ which it told.

Some examples of this prose of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church which continued to be read and studied faithfully all during the Middle Ages will serve to show the models which medieval prose writers on serious subjects had before them when they wished to express their thoughts. Take, for instance, a passage from St. Augustine (chapter xi of Book X) of his "Confessions" in which the Bishop of Hippo discusses the question that is the focus of so much attention in our day, the unconscious or the subconscious, and it will readily be understood what an excellent example he left to the Christian scholars of the Middle Ages in the matter of discussing recondite subjects simply and straightforwardly.

CHAPTER XI

What It Is to Learn

"We find, then, to learn such things as these—things of which we do not draw in images through the senses, but which we inwardly perceive without images, as they are by themselves—is nothing else, but by thinking, as it were, to collect those things which the memory before contained on all sides and in disorder; and by application of mind to take care that they, being, as it were, ready at hand in the memory, where before they lay concealed, scattered, and unused, might easily occur to the mind now familiarized with them. And how many of such things does my memory carry about which have been already discovered, and, as I said, placed ready at hand, which we are said to have learned and to have known; which, if for a little time I should cease to recall, they would be again buried, and glide back, as it were, into some more distant recesses, so that they must again, as if new, be sought out (for they can have no other region), and must be drawn together again that they may be known; that is, they must, as it were, be collected together from a sort of dispersion, whence we have the word 'to cogitate.' For 'I collect' bears the same relation to 'I recollect' as in Latin 'ago' bears to 'agito' and 'facio' to 'factito.' But the mind has appropriated this word 'cogitate' to itself, so that, not that which is collected anyhow, but that which is mentally collected, that is, brought together, is now properly said to be cogitated upon."

Besides the Fathers, some of the Doctors of the Church in the early centuries of Christianity before the barbarian invasions put an end to culture and civilization to a great extent, wrote in philosophic prose on even the abstrusest subjects with vividness and clarity. A rather striking example of this is to be found in the volume of St. Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity written in the second half of the fourth century. Hilary was a vigorous opponent of the Arianism so rife in his day. Hence this volume on the Trinity. It would be easy to think that a volume of controversial character would have very little

interest except for the time being and would very probably be couched in language that would represent at best the current speech of the moment. As a matter of fact, Hilary wrote model prose and examples can readily be found of passages in which significant scientific questions are touched upon or sometimes thoroughly discussed in a way that makes them very clear.

Here, for instance, is a striking passage from Hilary written about 356 which contains the first definite reference to anesthesia, in the sense of putting patients under the influence of a narcotic or anesthetic while serious operations were performed on them, that is to be found in modern history. In the course of his work on the Trinity, he has to discuss the psychology of sensation. While doing so he makes it very clear that the use of anesthetics in operations was such a commonplace that he need only refer to it as something well known to all and which affords him a ready illustration for his psychological discussion:

"When the body is pricked or pierced, it is the soul which pervades it that is conscious and suffers pain. For instance a flesh wound is felt even to the bone while the fingers feel nothing when we cut the nails which protrude from the flesh. And if through some disease a limb becomes withered, it loses the feeling of the living flesh: it can be cut or burned, it feels no pain whatever, because the soul is no longer mingled with it. Also when through some grave necessity part of the body must be cut away, the soul can be lulled to sleep by drugs, which overcome the pain, and produce in the mind a death-like forgetfulness of its power of sense. Then the limb can be cut off without pain. The flesh is dead to all feelings, and does not heed the deep thrust of the knife because the soul within is asleep."

It used to be the custom, not yet outworn, to say that

the philosophic prose, especially after the development of Scholastic philosophy in the Middle Ages was obscure, extremely difficult to understand, and anything but a model for imitation. This opinion was mainly held by those who know very little about Scholastic philosophy. The more one knows about it, the surer is the persuasion that seldom if ever have men expressed themselves with so little possibility of misunderstanding as during the medieval period when Scholastic philosophy was at its climax of interest and influence. Scholars who in recent years have devoted themselves to the study of Scholastic philosophy have been quite ready to declare how much the philosophic prose of the Scholastics not only clarified men's thinking but also their mode of expressing themselves. To take but a single striking example, Professor Saintsbury of Edinburgh in his work "The Flourishing of Romance and the Rise of Allegory" which is one of the series of "Periods of European Literature" has shown how sympathetically the prose writing of the thirteenth century may appeal even to a scholar of the modern time whose main interest all his life has been in literature rather than in philosophy.

Professor Saintsbury says: "However this may be," (whether the science of the nineteenth century after an equal interval will be of any more positive value, whether it will not have even less comparative interest than that which appertains to the Scholasticism of the thirteenth century) "the claim modest and even meager as it may seem to some, which has been here once more put forward for this Scholasticism—the claim of a far-reaching educative influence in mere language, in mere system of

arrangement and expression, will remain valid. If at the outset of the career of modern languages, men had thought with the looseness of modern thought, had indulged in the haphazard slovenliness of modern logic, had popularized theology and vulgarized rhetoric, as we have seen both popularized and vulgarized since, we should indeed have been in evil case. It used to be thought clever to moralize and to felicitate mankind over the rejection of the stays, the fetters, the prison in which its thought was medievally kept. The justice or the injustice, the taste or the vulgarity of these moralizings, of these felicitations, may not concern us here. But in expression, as distinguished from thought, the value of the discipline to which these youthful languages was subjected is not likely now to be denied by any scholar who has paid attention to the subject. It would have been perhaps a pity if thought had not gone through other phases; it would certainly have been a pity if the tongues had been subjected to the fullest influence of Latin constraint. But that the more lawless of them benefited by that constraint there can be no doubt whatever. The influence of form which the best Latin hymns of the Middle Age exercised in poetry, the influence in vocabulary and in logical arrangement which Scholasticism exercised in prose are beyond dispute; and even those who will not pardon literature, whatever its historic and educative importance be, for being something less than masterly in itself, will find it difficult to maintain the exclusion of the *Cur Deus Homo,* and impossible to refuse admission to the *Dies Iræ.*"

A characteristic example of the philosophic prose of

the later Middle Ages is to be found in Aquinas' discussion of the necessity there is for the revelation of the truth of the existence of God. His statement of the reasons why men, occupied with the ordinary affairs of life, would not be able to arrive at a formulation of this truth unless it were revealed to them, even though they actually possess the mental capacity to reach it by reason alone, will show how sympathetically the great Dominican philosopher appreciated human conditions as they are, and above all recognized poignantly how many distractions arise to keep men from devoting themselves with their complete intellectual powers to a problem of this kind. He says:

"If a truth of this nature were left to the sole inquiry of reason, three disadvantages would follow. One is that the knowledge of God would be confined to few. The discovery of truth is the fruit of studious inquiry. From this very many are hindered. Some are hindered by a constitutional unfitness, their natures being ill-disposed to the acquisition of knowledge. They could never arrive by study at the highest grade of human knowledge, which consists in the knowledge of God. Others are hindered by the claims of business and the ties of the management of property. There must be in human society some men devoted to temporal affairs. These could not possibly spend time enough in the learned lessons of speculative inquiry to arrive at the highest point of human inquiry, the knowledge of God. Some again are hindered by sloth. The knowledge of the truths that reason can investigate concerning God presupposes much previous knowledge; indeed almost the entire study of philosophy is directed to the knowledge of God. Hence, of all parts of philosophy that part stands over to be learned last, which consists of metaphysics (dealing with divine things). Thus only with great labour of study is it possible to arrive at the searching out of the aforesaid truth; and this labour few are willing to undergo for sheer love of knowledge.

"Another disadvantage is that such as did arrive at the knowledge or discovery of the aforesaid truth would take a

long time over it on account of the profundity of such truth, and the many prerequisites to the study, and also because in youth and early manhood the soul, tossed to and fro on the waves of passion, is not fit for the study of such high truth; only in settled age does the soul become prudent and scientific, as the philosopher says. Thus if the only way open to the knowledge of God were the way of reason, the human race would remain in thick darkness of ignorance; as the knowledge of God, the best instrument for making men perfect and good, would accrue only to a few after a considerable lapse of time.

"A third disadvantage is that, owing to the infirmity of our judgment and the perturbing force of imagination, there is some admixture of error in most of the investigations of human reason. This would be a reason to many for continuing to doubt even of the most accurate demonstrations, not perceiving the force of the demonstration, and seeing the divers judgments, of divers persons who have the name of being wise men. Besides, in the midst of much demonstrated truth there is sometimes an element of error, not demonstrated but asserted on the strength of some plausible and sophistic reasoning that is taken for a demonstration. And therefore it was necessary for the real truth concerning divine things to be presented to men with fixed certainty by way of faith. Wholesome, therefore, is the arrangement of divine clemency, whereby things even that reason can investigate are commanded to be held on faith, so that all might be easily partakers of the knowledge of God, and that without doubt and error (Book I, cix)."

To many who know Aquinas well, it seems that a still more striking example of Thomas' eminently sympathetic discussion from a human standpoint of a most difficult problem, is to be found in his treatment of the dogma accepted by all Christians, at least all those who repeat the Apostles' Creed, of the resurrection of the body. The dogma that men will rise again on the last day with the same bodies that they had while here on earth has been a stumbling block for the faith of a great many persons

from the beginning of Christianity. During the nineteenth century the teaching of the indestructibility of matter far from lessening the skeptical elements in this problem as might have been anticipated rather emphasized them. While the material of which man's body is composed is never destroyed, it is broken up largely into its original elements and is used over and over again in many natural processes and even enters into the composition of other men's bodies and of the animals during the long succeeding generations. Even the more modern teaching that matter and force are really one and not two different things and that matter is really some form of electrical energy though it may be either corpuscular or electronic in character, has not in any way helped in the solution of this mystery which remains a question of faith and not of understanding.

Aquinas' discussion of this problem does not solve the mystery, *that* will always remain, but it enables us to know just where the mystery lies better than before. He says:

"What does not bar numerical unity in a man while he lives on uninterruptedly, clearly can be no bar to the identity of the arisen man with the man that was. In a man's body, while he lives, there are not always the same parts in respect of matter but only in respect of species. In respect of matter there is a flux and reflux of parts. Still that fact does not bar the man's numerical unity from the beginning to the end of his life. The form and species of the several parts continue throughout life, but the matter of the parts is dissolved by the natural heat, and new matter accrues through nourishment. Yet the man is not numerically different by the difference of his component parts at different ages, although it is true that the material composition of the man at one stage of his life is not his material composition at another. Addition is made from without to the

stature of a boy without prejudice to his identity, for the boy and the adult are numerically the same man."

In a word, Aquinas says that we recognize that the body of the boy and of the man are the same though they are composed of quite different material. With this in mind the problem of the resurrection takes on quite a new aspect from what it held before. What we would call attention to, however, is not so much the matter of the argument as the mode of it. It is essentially modern in every respect. Not only does Thomas know that the body changes completely during the course of years, but he knows that the agent by which the matter of the parts is dissolved is "the natural heat," while "new matter accrues through nourishment." The passage contains a marvelous anticipation of present day physiology as well as a distinct contribution to Christian apologetics. This coördination of science and theology, though usually thought to be lacking among Scholastic philosophers, is constantly typical of their mode of thought and discussion, and this example, far from being exceptional, is genuinely representative of them, as all serious students of Scholasticism know.

These philosophic writers of the later Middle Ages created a mode of expression that is probably the most exact and accurate, especially in what concerns abstruse philosophic questions, that was ever invented. They used words in such a way as to express distinctions of meaning with the most absolute nicety. In doing so they departed from the Ciceronian grace of style and they did not hesitate to employ terms some of which had been invented for the purpose that were very far from being classical Latin.

They thus created an instrument that was marvelously capable of expressing exactly what they intended. It was not, however, because they did not know classical Latin that they used such terms, but that they had to develop a language for scholars—for whom this was the common mode of speech—that would enable them to convey their meaning with the most absolute nicety.

This Scholastic Latin does not make easy reading, but that is not because of any defect in the language of it but because of the depth and subtlety of the thoughts that has to be expressed. Professor Saintsbury's tribute to the Scholastics in this regard is well deserved. Now that Scholasticism is coming back not only in Catholic institutions of learning but also in secular colleges and universities wherever there is a serious effort to appreciate what was accomplished by these old philosophic thinkers, Scholastic Latin is also coming back into its proper mead of appreciation. Men like St. Thomas Aquinas or Duns Scotus or St. Bonaventure could take the most abstruse questions and discuss them without a shade of obscurity so far as understanding minds was concerned in that Scholastic Latin which had gradually been created as a fitting instrument for the expression of such deep problems. Scotus' first name, Duns, came in the course of time to be the appellation for dunce or "nitwit," but that was not because of anything in himself but owing to abuses of his method of argument introduced by superficial followers who did not properly appreciate his methods. It was subsequent abuses and not the fine philosophic prose of the great Scholastic writers that led to the dubious reputation that Scholastic Latin enjoyed.

CHAPTER XVI

Didactic Prose

THOUGH the fact is not usually appreciated, there was a great thirst for information during the Middle Ages. Only a very limited number of people could read but they were as deeply interested in ready sources of knowledge as the people of our own time, as far as we can judge from the circulation of what would in our time be called encyclopedias. In spite of the fact that the hand copying of manuscript books was so slow, some of these encyclopedias existed in a great many copies and these copies were very frequently consulted. Three encyclopedists of the Middle Ages were very widely known, Vincent of Beauvais, Bartholomew the Englishman (Bartholomeus Anglicus) and Thomas of Cantimprato. They furnish excellent examples of didactic prose but besides them there were writers intent on furnishing information on special topics, as for instance medicine, and the care of the sick, who come under the same category.

The greatest of the encyclopedists was Vincent of Beauvais. The importance of his work, the famous "Triple Mirror" in which he condenses all the information available in his day, will be best appreciated from the fact that if his four huge tomes (for besides the "Triple Mirror" there is a fourth great volume, each containing over a million of words) were to be printed in the

octavo format in the modern time, they would occupy some sixty volumes.

The author of the work was the famous Dominican scholar, Vincent of Beauvais, who consulted all the authors sacred and profane that he could possibly lay his hands on and the number of them was prodigious. His patron in the great work was Louis IX of France who generously offered to defray the expenses of the composition of it. Vincent acknowledged this by declaring in his prefatory letter to the King: "You have always liberally given assistance even to the work of gathering the materials."

Vincent had the advantage of having at his disposition the numerous libraries of the monasteries throughout France. Besides he consulted documents in the chapter houses of the cathedrals especially those of Paris, Rouen, Laon, Beauvais and Bayeux which were particularly rich in collections of manuscripts. It might be thought that these libraries and archives would be closely guarded. Far from being closed to writers from without, they were accessible to all on certain conditions and a number of them are mentioned by Vincent as public institutions.

Vincent's method of composition is quite as interesting as his mode of compiling information. He made use for this purpose of a whole army of young assistants most of them members of his own order, the Dominicans. He makes special mention in a number of instances of quotations due to their collaboration. He was not satisfied with being merely a source of information. Vincent tried deliberately to imitate St. Augustine so that besides writing history he traced the philosophy of it. For him as for

the great French philosophic historian, Bossuet, in his "Universal History" five centuries later, everything runs its provided race from the creation to the redemption and then on toward the consummation of the world. He notes the commencement of empires and kingdoms, their glory, the sovereigns who made them illustrious in peace and war, their decadence, their ruin. There was much that was defective in the details of history as they were traced by Vincent, much that was lacking in completeness, but his intention was of the best, and patience and labor were devoted to working up properly the sources of history at his command. Perhaps never more than at the present moment have we been in a position to realize that history at its best can be so full of defects, even after further centuries of consultation of documents, that it behooves us not to take on too critical mood toward this pioneer modern historian.

Nor must it be thought that Vincent has only a historic or ecclesiastical interest. Dr. Julius Pagel in his chapter on "Medicine in the Middle Ages" in Puschmann's "Handbook of the History of Medicine"* says, that "There were three writers whose works were even more popular than those of Albertus Magnus. These three were Bartholomew the Englishman; Thomas of Cantimprato, and Vincent of Beauvais, the last of whom must be considered as one of the most important contributors to the generalization of scientific knowledge, not alone in the thirteenth but in the immediately succeeding centuries. His most important work was really an encyclopedia of the knowledge of his time. It was called the

*Puschmann, *Hand-Buch der Geschichte der Medizin*, Jena, Fischer, 1902.

"Greater Triple Mirror" and there is no doubt that it reflected the knowledge of his period. He had the true scientific spirit and constantly cites the authorities from whom his information was derived. He cites hundreds of authors and there is scarcely a subject that he does not touch on. One book of his work is concerned with human anatomy, and the concluding portion of it is an abbreviation of history carried down to the year 1250.

It might be considered that such a compend of information would be very dry-as-dust reading and that it would be fragmentary in character and little likely to be attractive except to a serious student. Dr. Pagel's opinion does not agree with this *a priori* impression. He says with regard to it:

"The language is clear, readily intelligible, and the information is conveyed usually in an excellent, simple style. Through the introduction of interesting similes the contents do not lack a certain taking quality, so that the reading of the work easily becomes absorbing."

This is, I suppose, almost the last thing that might be expected of a scientific teacher in the Middle Ages, because, after all, Vincent of Beauvais must be considered as one of the schoolmen, and they are supposed to be eminently arid, but evidently, if we are to trust this testimony of a modern German physician, only by those who have not taken the trouble to read them.

These books of knowledge were popular mainly for reasons similar to those which have made encyclopedias popular in our own day. They supplied very much desired information. It would be easy to think that this information, gathered at the end of the thirteenth century,

would be rather absurd in our day, and that it was mainly misinformation, for so many even scholarly people at that time thought they knew ever so much more about many things than they really did. Before impugning these encyclopedias for supposed absurdities, it is well to know some of the details which they supplied. In this regard the work of Bartholomew, the Englishman, is particularly interesting. His *De proprietatibus rerum* was a manual mainly for priests meant to supply information for confessors and pastors to whom their penitents and parishioners would quite naturally apply for knowledge with regard to obscure or ill understood questions. Bartholomew was probably the most read book before the invention of printing, except the Bible, and perhaps the Fathers of the Church. Half a dozen editions of his work were issued during the first generation of printing and are among the incunabula. The book was translated into four of the vernacular languages and was evidently very much consulted.

It is known that Shakespeare read Bartholomew assiduously and much of the curious information and misinformation that the dramatist had in natural history comes from Bartholomew. From him Shakespeare learned about the jewel in the head of the frog and not a little of what he has to say about precious stones and their relations to human beings as well as the various folklore associated with plants and flowers and insects and animals. Here, for instance, is a brief article on Moths by Bartholomew from which Shakespeare's reference to the pest in Coriolanus was obtained:

"A moth is a worm of clothes and is gendered of corruption of cloth when the cloth is too long in press (that is clothes-press) and thick air, and is not blown with wind, neither unfolded in pure air. And though he be a sensible beast, yet he hideth himself within a cloth that unneath (only with difficulty) is he seen. Leaves of the laurel tree, of cedars and of cypress and other such, put among clothes in hutches, save the clothes and also books from corruption and eating of moths."

Bartholomew knew the danger to clothes of being shut away in closets and was well aware of the preservative value of an airing. He also knew the plants whose aromatic principles acted as protectives against the domestic nuisance.

Others of Bartholomew's paragraphs, packed full of information as they had it at that time, illustrate very well what a gatherer of considered and unconsidered trifles he must have been. Here, for instance, is his article on oil:

"Oil is the juice of herbs of olive, and the more fresh it is, the more noble it is, and the more slyly it cometh out of the hulls, the better it is and the more noble. (Bartholomew knew the tradition of oil on troubled waters.) If a man be under water with Oil in his mouth and spouteth out that Oil there in the water, all that is in the bottom, and hid by the ground, is the more clear and the more clearly seen of him. Some kinds of Oil maketh good savour in meat (the frying processes), and nourisheth light (that is, may be used in lamps), and easeth, refresheth and comforteth weary bodies and limbs. Many diverse Oils be pressed out of many diverse things: as Oil of Olive, Oil of Nuts, Oil of Poppy, Oil of Almonds, of Raphans (*i.e.*, Radishes), Oil of Linseed, Oil of Hemp, and of other such. And Oil slayeth bees, and footless beasts with long and pliant bodies, if it be shed upon them, and vinegar turneth them again to life, if it be shed upon them."

In his time there were as many traditions with regard to the opal as there are at the present time. In our day

there are still those who believe that the opal has much to do with revealing the fate of its possessor, and that something of what is to happen to him can be read in its variations of color. Bartholomew tells of these claims in his time, but his description of what he actually knows from observation is quite different from the hesitant way in which he suggests some of its more mystical qualities. He says that it is "deemed" to have as many virtues as colors. He is careful to say in his last declaration that "it is said." Bartholomew was wary in his declarations:

"Opal is a stone distingued with colours of divers precious stones; therein is the fiery colour of the carbuncle, the shining purple of the amethyst, the bright green colour of emerald; and all the colours shine with a varied diversity. This stone breedeth only in Ind, and is deemed to have as many virtues as colours. This stone keepeth and saveth his eyes, that him beareth, clear and sharp and without grief;—and dimmeth other men's eyes that be about with a manner (sort of) cloud, and smiteth them with a manner blindness, so that they may not see, neither take heed, what is done tofore their eyes. Therefore *it is said,* that it is the most sure patron of thieves."

Bartholomew was rather thoroughly persuaded that the animals, by instinct, were able to have recourse to various plants that proved to be curative for their disorders when they occurred. Veterinarians scout the idea and know that the animals are as helpless as ourselves in this matter but there is a folklore of the subject which still continues to be accepted by many people, some of them supposedly well informed. For instance, Ernest Seton Thompson, in some of his animal books, suggested that the bears had found out that some of the mineral and hot springs afforded an excellent remedy for the pains and aches they suffered as the result of exposure

as the years went on. The American Indians are supposed to have imitated the animals. Bartholomew thought that the dogs knew how to pick out certain grasses and herbs that benefited them. His article on grass is interesting for this reason. He has crowded a number of items of information into it:

"Grass cometh of the green, and is pleasing in sight, and liking to beasts in pasture and meat, and comforteth the sick in action, for as in roots so in herbs and Grass be many manner virtues. Herbs and Grass love stern weather, rain and great showers, for heat and colour herbs need much moisture. Hounds know this herb, and eat it to purge themselves, but they do it so privily, that unneath men may spy it."

There are many other pieces of information that might be referred to but the best testimony to Bartholomew's value as purveyor of information is to be found in his article with regard to madness or insanity. It is doubtful whether anyone has ever, in the brief compass of a little more than a hundred words, given so good a description of the causes and forms of insanity, the symptoms, the treatment, and above all, the recognition of the necessity for change of environment and occupation of mind with other things, as this Franciscan friar of the middle of the thirteenth century in his *De proprietatibus rerum:*

"Madness cometh sometimes of passions of the soul, as of business and of great thoughts, of sorrow and of too great study, and of dread; sometime of the biting of a wood (mad) hound, or some other venomous beast; sometime of melancholy meats, and sometime of drink of strong wine. And as the causes be diverse, the tokens and signs be diverse. For some cry and leap and hurt and wound themselves and other men, and darken and hide themselves in privy and secret places. The medicine (treatment) of them is, that they be bound, that they hurt not themselves and other men. And namely, such shall be

refreshed, and comforted, and withdrawn from cause and matter of dread and busy thoughts. And they must be gladded with instruments of music, and some deal be occupied."

There are a number of absurdities in Bartholomew's volume. There is much about the unicorn, for instance, though in connection with it Bartholomew discusses the rhinoceros. According to him the unicorn is so strong that he is not taken with might of hunters. He is a chivalrous beast, however, and would come and set himself down beside a maid leaving all his fierceness and so be taken without weapon. Bartholomew listened to the stories of the drawers of the long bow. There are many things with regard to medicine particularly, and the various remedies that will cure men of diseases which Bartholomew mentions with approval. Almost needless to say such absurdities have been met in all the literature relating to medicine. The first edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, issued about one hundred and fifty years ago, has a number of them. A distinguished French professor of medicine declared that "the therapeutics (that is the special methods of treatment for any disease) of one generation is usually absurd to the next generation and practically always to the second succeeding generation." Bartholomew was intent on collecting the information that was current in his time taking such authorities as were available.

MEDICAL PROSE

A form of didactic prose in Latin, very interesting in the books that come to us from the Middle Ages, is that in which surgeons give advice with regard to the management of patients and thus reveal how much more they

anticipated our modern attitude of mind with regard to surgical problems than could possibly be thought, only that the conservation of their books and their reprinting in the modern time brought us definite information with regard to it. We have, for instance, the text-book of surgery *La Grande Chirurgie* that was written by Henri de Mondeville at the University of Paris toward the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Mondeville was born in the north of France but made his studies in surgery toward the end of the thirteenth century under Theodoric in Italy. Theodoric was a bishop but his father had been a surgeon and he himself had been trained in surgery in his earlier years and he wrote the account of the surgical operations that had been done by his father. It is surprising how many of these are the same as are done at the present time and how much more surgery was practised than is usually thought.

After studying in Italy, Mondeville went to Montpellier and also to Paris, so that he had the advantage of all the best teaching of the time. After this he lectured at Montpellier and subsequently at Paris attracting to both universities during his professorship a crowd of students from every part of Europe. No wonder, then, that Mondeville was selected to accompany the King on this campaign so that he might be at hand if anything should happen to the royal person or if any of those near the King should require surgical assistance.

Mondeville was no narrow specialist but on the contrary was a man of broad education and his book shows that far from considering his education finished when he

received his degree, he continued to read widely so that he was a man of broad culture. After he had been teaching surgery for a while in Paris, the dean of the medical school at the university suggested that he should write a book on the subject mainly with the idea of thus attracting more students to the medical school in order that they might have the advantage of Mondeville's teaching. Mondeville had a large consultant practice and between that and his position as royal surgeon, it was extremely difficult for him to find the time to do the writing.

He accomplished his purpose, however, and his book reveals very well his scholarship, for there is almost no writer of any importance who seriously touched upon medicine or surgery before his time whom Mondeville does not quote. There are citations of Hippocrates, Aristotle, Dioscorides, Pliny, Galen, Rhases, Ali Abbas, Abulcasis, Avicenna, Constantine Africanus, Averröes, Maimonides, Albertus Magnus, Hugh of Lucca, Theodoric, William of Salicet, Lanfranc. All these are quoted and most of them not once or twice but many times. Besides he has quotations from the poets and philosophers Cato, Diogenes, Horace, Ovid, Plato, Seneca and others. He was a learned man devoting himself to surgery.

The beginning of the preface, then, is an interesting personal revelation:

"I began to write this book for the honor and praise of Christ Jesus, of the Virgin Mary, of the saints and martyrs Cosmas and Damien (the patron saints of medicine) and of King Philip of France as well as his four children, and on the proposal and request of Master William of Brescia, distinguished professor in the science of medicine and formerly

physician to Popes Boniface and Benedict and now to Clement, the present pope."

Mondeville puts great emphasis on the necessity for maintaining an atmosphere of hopefulness and even happiness around the patient. He said:

"Let the surgeon take care to regulate the whole regimen of the patient's life for joy and happiness by promising that he will soon be well, by allowing his relatives and special friends to cheer him and by having someone to tell him jokes, and let him be solaced also by music on the viol or psalter. The surgeon must forbid anger, hatred and sadness in the patient and remind him that the body grows fat from joy and thin from sadness. He must insist on the patient obeying him faithfully in all things."

We have heard much in recent years of the influence of the mind on the body and how important for curative purposes it is to keep the mind of the patient in as hopeful a condition as possible. Usually this is considered to be a very modern idea and yet Mondeville insisted very much on this more than six hundred years ago. He repeats with approval the expression of Avicenna that

"Often the confidence of the patient in his physician does more for the cure of his disease than the physician with all his remedies."

He has some very valuable advice with regard to the selection of nurses who are to care for the patient while he is not directly under the care of the surgeon, and he evidently was persuaded that the nurse was almost as important as the surgeon and might readily undo the work of the surgeon or at least greatly delay the patient's cure. He said:

"For if the assistants (this was the term used for nurses) are not solicitous and faithful and obedient to the surgeons in

each and everything which may make for the cure of disease, they put obstacles and difficulties in the way of the surgeon."

Mondeville objects strenuously to garrulous, talkative nurses, and he does not hesitate to say that sometimes near relatives are particularly likely to disturb patients:

"Especially are they prone to let drop some hint of bad news which the surgeon may have revealed to them under seal of secrecy, or they may repeat reports that they have heard from others, friends or enemies, and such gossip provokes the patient to anger or anxiety and is likely to give him fever. If the assistants fail to agree among themselves or are heard murmuring or if they draw long faces, all of these things will disturb the patient and produce worry and anxiety or fear. The surgeon, therefore, must be careful in the selection of his assistants, for some of them obey very well while he is present but do as they like and often just exactly the opposite of what he has directed when he is away."

Mondeville has a very interesting passage with regard to husbands and wives and their relations to the surgeon which is a little bit difficult to understand in our day:

"In our day in this Gallican part of the world wives rule their husbands and the men for the most part permit themselves to be ruled. Whatever a surgeon may order for the cure of a husband, then, will often seem to the wives to be a waste of good material, though the men seem to be quite willing to get anything that may be ordered for the cure of their wives. The whole cause of this seems to be that every woman seems to think her husband is not as good as those of other women whom she sees around her."

That passage makes one wonder whether Mondeville himself was married or not. It is probable that he was not, for all of these surgeons of the thirteenth century before Mondeville's time, Theodoric, William of Salicet, Lanfranc, and Guy de Chauliac after him, belonged to the clerical orders. Theodoric was a bishop; the others,

however, seem only to have been in minor orders. His clerical position may or may not have given Mondeville an opportunity to view matrimony from the proper angle.

What disturbed this great surgeon more than anything else was the number of quacks and charlatans who pretended to do people good and really did them harm. He said:

"Barbers, soothsayers, loan agents, falsifiers, alchemists, midwives, old women, converted Jews, real or pretended Saracens, or men from the East, indeed most of those who have wasted their substance foolishly, proceed after that to make physicians or surgeons of themselves in order to make their living under the cloak of healing."

Mondeville even suggests that some of the clergymen of his time "seem to think that a knowledge of medicine was infused into them with the sacrament of Holy Orders."

Mondeville's volume on surgery was written originally in Latin but even these translations from it will make it clear that he knew how to express himself in straightforward, and, when necessary, vigorous language. This was true also of a series of other surgeons who wrote on their specialty about this time. Some half a dozen of them had their text-books printed among the incunabula, that is before 1501. Mondeville's book remained in manuscript, however, until 1892 when a special edition of it was published by the German historian of medicine, Pagel, in Berlin. It is easy to understand how near we came not to having Mondeville available for study as an example of the didactic prose of the Middle Ages. His text-book

existed in a large number of manuscript copies, however, showing how much his immediate successors valued the work and how freely it had been consulted though for that purpose the slow and difficult process of handwriting had to be gone through. Mondeville is looked upon as one of the most distinguished workers in his specialty and has a very definite and lasting place in the history of medicine.

The great French surgeon's recognition of the influence of the mind on the body is a good introduction to that other mutual influence of body and mind which is not supposed to have been appreciated at anything like its true worth in the Middle Ages yet with regard to which we have some medieval documents which emphasize the value of physical education.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The attitude of mind of educators at the end of the Middle Ages toward physical education is very interesting because it is usually presumed that no attention was paid to this educational department. We have a number of documents which show how little truth there is in any such presumption and some of them make it very clear that educators were deeply intent on the exemplification of that old proverb, "a healthy mind in a healthy body." Vittorino da Feltre's school at Mantua, on the border of the lake, gathered a group of noble youths and maidens who were taught Latin, Greek, philosophy, mathematics, grammar, logic, music, singing and dancing, but also were given physical exercises of various kinds, and horseback riding and outdoor sports were insisted on. The scholars

were taught "to live the simple life, to tell the truth, and to remember that true scholarship is inseparable from virtue and a sense of lofty gratitude towards the Creator." Sandys in his Harvard lectures on "The Revival of Learning," has told the story of some of these young women scholars of Vittorino da Feltre which show how gratefully they held their distinguished teacher in remembrance because of the physical and intellectual training which they had received.

There is a monograph on the education of young folks; it is really a letter to Ladislas, the young King of Bohemia and Hungary, written by Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, the distinguished Italian scholar, which is very interesting in this regard. Æneas Sylvius afterwards became pope under the title of Pius II. He had been sent to distant parts of Europe on missions for the pope before his own election and he was looked upon as one of the great scholars of the time. This letter was written just as the Middle Ages were closing:

"As regards a boy's physical training, we must bear in mind that we aim at implanting habits which will prove beneficial during life. So let him cultivate a certain hardness which rejects excess of sleep and idleness in all its forms. Habits of indulgence—such as the luxury of soft beds, or the wearing of silk instead of linen next to the skin, tend to enervate both body and mind. Too much importance can hardly be attached to right bearing and gesture. Childish habits of playing with the lips and features should be early controlled. A boy should be taught to hold his head erect, to look straight and fearlessly before him, and to bear himself with dignity, whether walking, standing, or sitting. In ancient Greece we find that both philosophers and men of affairs—Socrates, for instance, and Chrysippus, or Philip of Macedon—deemed this matter worthy of their concern, and therefore it may well be thought deserving of ours.

Church of S. Maria de' Frari

Games and exercises which develop the muscular activities and the general carriage of the person should be encouraged by every teacher. For such physical training not only cultivates grace of attitude, but secures the healthy play of our bodily organs and establishes the constitution.

"Every youth destined to exalted position should further be trained in military exercises. It will be your destiny to defend Christendom against the Turk. It will thus be an essential part of your education that you be early taught the use of the bow, of the sling, and of the spear; that you drive, ride, leap and swim. These are honorable accomplishments in every one, and therefore not unworthy of the educator's care. Ponder the picture which Virgil gives of the youth of the Itali, skilled in all the warlike exercise of their time. Games, too, should be encouraged for young children—the ball, the hoop—but these must not be rough and coarse, but have in them an element of skill. Such relaxations should form an integral part of each day's occupations, if learning is not to be an object of disgust. Just as nature and the life of man present us with alternations of effort and repose—toil and sleep, winter and summer—so we may hold, with Plato, that it is a law of our being that rest from work is a needed condition of further work. To observe this truth is a chief duty of the master.

"In respect of eating and drinking, the rule of moderation consists in rejecting anything which needlessly taxes digestion and so impairs mental activity. At the same time fastidiousness must not be humored. A boy, for instance, whose lot it may be to face life in the camp, or in the forest, should so discipline his appetite that he may eat even beef. The aim of eating is to strengthen the frame; so let vigorous health reject cakes or sweets, elaborate dishes of small birds or eels, which are for the delicate and the weakly. Your own countrymen, like all northern peoples, are, I know, sore offenders in this matter of eating and drinking. But I count upon your own innate self-respect to preserve you from such bad example, and to enable you to despise the sneers and complaints of those around you. What but disease and decay can result from appetite habitually over-indulged?"

CHAPTER XVII

History and Biography

THE philosophic writings represent the most important contribution to the prose of the Middle Ages. After this came what may be called historical prose which consisted mainly of the chronicles and biographies written during the medieval period and the stories of travelers and explorers. The historical prose of the period deserves serious attention. It is usually considered that chroniclers are rather tiresome old fogies who talk much and say very little, who accept all sorts of legends on insufficient authority, and who like to fill up their pages with the recital of signs and wonders and surprising events of all kinds regardless of their truth. In this regard it must not be forgotten that in times almost within the memory of men still alive, Herodotus, now looked upon deservedly as the father of history and one of the greatest historical writers of all time, was considered as not unlike these chroniclers and his works were ranked scarcely higher except for the purity of their Greek style.

The greatest of the chroniclers in the Middle Ages was the famous Geoffrey de Villehardouin, who was himself a very prominent actor in the scenes which he described. He was enrolled among the élite of French chivalry in that crusade at the beginning of the thirteenth century which resulted in the foundation of the Græco-Latin empire. He gained special distinction for his

astuteness in negotiating with the Venetians for the transport of the crusaders by sea to the Holy Land. His book entitled, "The Conquest of Constantinople," includes the story of the expedition during the years from 1198 to 1207. Modern war correspondents have seldom succeeded in giving a more vivid picture of the events of which they were witnesses than this first French chronicler of the thirteenth century. While his chronicle is considered eminently trustworthy, with details that could only have been secured by an eye-witness, its high estimation is due to its literary excellence, all the more surprising because it is one of the oldest monuments of original French prose. The volume has been issued in many editions since.

It is evident that the work was composed with the idea that it should be recited as had been the old poetic *Chansons de Geste* in the castles of the nobles and before assemblages of the people, perhaps on fair days and other times when the people from long distances were gathered. For this purpose it is written in the lively, straightforward style which directly appealed to its auditors. It contains not a few passages of highly poetic description which show that the chronicler himself was a poet of no mean order but also probably well versed in the effusions of the older poets of his country. His vivid sketch of the fleet of the crusaders and then his description of its arrival before the imposing walls of Constantinople, the imperial capital, are the best examples of this and have not been surpassed even by modern writers on similar topics.

As has been said, though the French writer was beyond

all doubt utterly unfamiliar with the Grecian historical writers and surely knew nothing of Xenophon, there is a constant reminder of the Greek historian in his work. Xenophon's simple directness, his thoroughgoing sincerity, the impression he produces of absolute good faith and the confidence which he inspires as to the completeness of the picture which he presents, so that one feels as if one had been present almost in person at many of the scenes described, are all to be encountered in his medieval successor.

Villehardouin went far ahead of his predecessors, the chroniclers of foregoing centuries, in his careful devotion to truth. He had the advantage of being an eye-witness of many things that he described. The old monastic chroniclers had to obtain their details as best they could, usually from old documents but sometimes from people who had been present at events but were not good observers and then often from people who claimed they had been present, but who were not, and were very ready to talk all the more though they had nothing worth while to say.

A French writer has declared that to Villehardouin must be ascribed the foundation of historical probity. None of his facts stated as such has ever been impugned and though the long speeches which he puts into the mouths of historical characters who were his companions were not what was actually said and must necessarily have been the historian's composition afterwards, there seems no doubt that they contained the ideas which had been expressed on the various historical occasions and were composed from the memory of many actual expressions.

Professor Saintsbury, in his article in the Encyclopedia Britannica on Villehardouin, sums up very strikingly the place that this first great vernacular historian's book must occupy:

"It is not impertinent, and at the same time an excuse for what has been already said, to repeat that Villehardouin's book, brief as it is, is in reality one of the capital books of literature, not merely for its merit, but because it is the most authentic and the most striking embodiment in the contemporary literature of the sentiments which determined the action of a great and important period of history. There are but very few books which hold this position, and Villehardouin's is one of them. If every other contemporary record of the crusades perished, we should still be able by aid of this to understand and realize what the mental attitude of crusaders, of Teutonic knights, and the rest was, and without this we should lack the earliest, the most undoubtedly genuine, and the most characteristic of all such records. The very inconsistency with which Villehardouin is chargeable, the absence of compunction with which he relates the changing of a sacred religious pilgrimage into something by no means unlike a mere filibustering raid on a great scale, add a charm to the book. For, religious as it is, it is entirely free from the very slightest touch of hypocrisy or, indeed, of self-consciousness of any kind. The famous description of the crusades, *gesta Dei per Francos,* was evidently to Villehardouin a plain matter-of-fact description, and it no more occurred to him to doubt the divine favor being extended to the expeditions

against Alexius or Theodore than to doubt that it was shown to expeditions against Saracens and Turks."

The greatest historian of the latter half of the Middle Ages was undoubtedly Matthew Paris, who died shortly after the middle of the thirteenth century. He is said to owe his surname to the circumstance that he studied at the University of Paris. He was a Benedictine and represents almost the last of the old monastic chroniclers. His chief work is the *Chronica Majora* which is perhaps better known under the name *Historia Major*. This is a chronicle of events from the creation of the world to the year 1259. Down to 1235 it is only a modification of an earlier work, *Flores Historiarum,* "The Flowers of the Histories," a selection of striking passages from various historical writings. For the succeeding twenty-five years, however, Matthew Paris' history was compiled exclusively from original sources and this is his valuable contribution to history.

Green, the English historian, has a passage in his "History of the English People" in which he pays a magnificent tribute to his colleague of the earlier time. No better appreciation of Matthew can be secured than from this paragraph written by one whose own life work put him in a position where he could judge impartially and understandingly of his great predecessor of some seven hundred years before in the historical field:

"The story of this period of misrule has been preserved for us by an annalist whose pages glow with the new outburst of patriotic feeling which this common expression of the people and the clergy had produced. Matthew Paris is the greatest, as he is in reality the last of our

monastic historians. The school of St. Albans survived indeed till a far later time, but the writers dwindle into mere annalists whose view is bounded by the Abbey precincts, and whose work is as colorless as it is jejune. In Matthew the breadth and precision of the narrative, the copiousness of his information on topics whether national or European, the general fairness and justice of his comments, are only surpassed by the patriotic fire and enthusiasm of the whole. He had succeeded Roger of Wendover as Chronicler of St. Albans; and the Greater Chronicle, with the abridgement of it which has long passed under the name of Matthew of Westminster, a 'History of the English,' and the 'Lives of the Earlier Abbots,' were only a few among the voluminous works which attest his prodigious industry. He was an eminent artist as well as an historian, and many of the manuscripts which are preserved are illustrated by his own hand. A large circle of correspondents—bishops like Grosseteste, ministers like Hubert de Burgh, officials like Alexander de Swinford—furnished him with minute accounts of political and ecclesiastical proceedings. Pilgrims from the East and papal agents brought news of foreign events to his scriptorium at St. Albans. He had access to and quotes largely from state documents, charters, and exchequer rolls. The frequency of royal visits to the abbey brought him a store of political intelligence and Henry himself contributed to the great chronicle which has preserved with so terrible a faithfulness the memory of his weakness and misgovernment. On one solemn feast-day the King recognized Matthew, and bidding him sit on the middle step between the floor and the throne, begged him to write the

story of the day's proceedings. While on a visit to St. Albans he invited him to his table and chamber, and enumerated by name two hundred and fifty of the English barons for his information. But all this royal patronage has left little mark on his work. *'The case,'* as he says, *'of historical writers is hard, for if they tell the truth they provoke men, and if they write what is false they offend God.'* With all the fulness of the school of court historians, such as Benedict of Hoveden, Matthew Paris combines an independence and patriotism which is strange to their pages. He denounces with the same unsparing energy the oppression of the Papacy and the King. His point of view is neither that of a courtier nor of a churchman, but of an Englishman, and the new national tone of his chronicle is but an echo of the national sentiment which at last bound nobles and yeomen and churchmen together into an English people."

The fine historical writing of these thirteenth century historians is all the more striking because they had before them the work of a man who attracted very wide attention in his own day but also in theirs, who paid so little attention to historical truth that his *Historia* has come to be looked upon as almost pure fiction. This was the chronicler, Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose years correspond almost with the first half of the twelfth century. He wrote *Chronicon sive Historia Britonum,* "The English Chronicle or History of the Britons," which appeared just about the middle of the twelfth century and created a great sensation. When he wrote it, Geoffrey was a respected member of the higher clergy who a little later became bishop of St. Asaph, but in spite of his priestly

and episcopal dignity the general impression is that he practised a hoax on his generation. He professed that his "History of the Britons" was the translation of a Latin work written in Brittany. This supposed original has never been seen and the general impression is that Geoffrey's so-called history is largely imaginary.

It is to Geoffrey we owe the legends about King Arthur which have been the subjects of so much attention from the poets ever since. He did not originate the cycle of romances but, as has been said, he made the existing legends radiant with poetic color. As a result they became the common property of Europe. They were taken over by the Trouvêres in France, the Minnesingers in Germany, as well as many of the English writers of the time, as subjects for poems. Not a few of these are still extant and some of them are considered to be of high literary value.

Holinshed, the English historical writer of Elizabeth's reign, was fascinated by Geoffrey and as he was Shakespeare's resource for many historical plays, Geoffrey of Monmouth's legends came to exert a lasting influence on English literature. This was felt in many other ways. The first English tragedy, "Gorboduc," or "Ferrex and Porrex" (1565), is founded on the *Historia Britonum*. Many other writers, Spenser of the "Faerie Queene," Warner, of "Albion's England," Drayton of the "Polyolbion," and the authors of other English works of Elizabeth's day, owe much to Geoffrey's imaginative history. Even for Milton the *Historia* was a favorite book and as a result he once thought of writing a long poem on King Arthur. Dryden was much interested in Geoffrey and

proposed to write an epic on Arthur while Pope planned an epic on Brutus. It is easy to understand how deeply Geoffrey impressed himself on succeeding generations and especially on the chosen minds among them. No wonder that it has been said that, "with the exception of the translation of the Bible, probably no book has furnished so large an amount of literary material to English writers." No wonder, too, that Chaucer gives Geoffrey a place in his "House of Fame." What is surprising is that for centuries after Chaucer's time Geoffrey continued to influence deeply the greater English writers.

While a vigorous prose was developing either in Latin or in the vernacular in the various countries of Europe, Italy was not out of line in this regard. Very probably the best demonstration of this is to be found in Dante's contribution to both these forms of prose. He took the expression of the message he had to convey very seriously either in prose or verse. In a passage at the end of his "Letter to the Peoples and Princes of Italy," in which he prays for peace among nations, and for the opportunity to return to his native city of Florence, Dante gives his philosophy of history which finds a place appropriately here:

"Surely, if through the things which have been created by God the human creature sees the invisible things with the eyes of the intellect, and if from the things better known those less known become evident to us, in like manner it concerns human apprehension that from the motion of the heavens we should know the Motor and His will; and this predestination will be seen readily even by those who look superficially. For if from the first spark of this fire we turn back to things past, from the time, I say, when hospitality was denied the Argives by the Phrygians; and if there is time to survey the affairs of the

world even to the triumphs of Octavian, we shall see that some of them have completely transcended the heights of human valor, and that God has worked through men, just as through the medium of the new heavens. For we do not always act of ourselves; rather we are sometimes the instruments of God, and the human will, in which liberty is innate, acts sometimes free even from earthly passions, and, subservient to the Eternal Will, often serves it without knowing it.

"And if these things which are first principles, as it were, for proving that which is sought, are not sufficient, who, proceeding from the conclusion inferred through facts will not be compelled to think as I do, perceiving that peace has embraced the world completely for twelve years—a peace which revealed in its accomplishment the face of its syllogizer, the Son of God. And while He, made man, preached the Gospel on earth for the revelation of the Holy Ghost, as if he were dividing two kingdoms, distributing all things to himself and Cæsar, He commanded to 'Render unto each the things that are his.'

"But if the obstinate mind demands further, not yet assenting to the truth, let him examine the words of Christ, even when in chains, for He who is our light, when Pilate opposed His power, asserted that the office which he, as lieutenant of Cæsar, was vaunting of, came from on high. Therefore walk ye not even as the Gentiles, involved in darkness by the vanity of the senses; but open the eyes of your mind, and see, for the Lord of heaven and earth has ordained a king for us. This is he whom Peter, the vicar of God, admonished us to honor; whom Clement, now the successor of Peter, illuminates with the light of the apostolic benediction, in order that where the spiritual ray does not suffice, the splendor of the lesser light may illumine."

The biographical prose of the Middle Ages is particularly interesting because of its eminently personal character, and it contains some works that are among the masterpieces in this mode of literature. The earliest of these is Einhard's (or less correctly Eginhard's) life of Charlemagne, *Vita Caroli Magni.* This famous Frankish scholar was of noble birth and received the beginnings of

his education at the monastery of Fulda. This is one of the oldest monasteries in Germany founded before the middle of the eighth century. He showed such high intellectual capacity that the abbot recommended him to the attention of Charlemagne and his education was continued at the palace school where he was fortunate enough to count among his masters the distinguished Alcuin, the English monk who had been invited by Charlemagne to take charge of the school. Alcuin bears witness to the extraordinary talent of Einhard in mathematics and architecture. Charlemagne gave Einhard charge of his public works and especially his public buildings. To him was intrusted the construction of Aachen cathedral and the palaces of Aachen and Ingelheim. The eighth century scarcely seems the time for the study of architecture, but this is history.

Einhard was a very close friend of the great monarch who liked to surround himself with handsome men and who made a special exception in favor of Einhard who, according to well grounded tradition, was anything but prepossessing in looks. Charlemagne sent him on a series of diplomatic missions recognizing his tact and prudence.

It is easy to understand under these circumstances that Einhard was in a position during more than a quarter of a century to know Charlemagne more intimately almost than anyone else. He was constantly able to note details that others would scarcely have been able to secure and this intimate knowledge of the subject of his biography is to be noted in his life of Charles the Great, as it must not be forgotten the historical title, Charlemagne, means. If one is surprised in reading some of the passages of

Charlemagne's life to find great intimacy of detail, and the reporting of speeches made by the great monarch on various occasions, it will be recalled that it would have been comparatively easy for Einhard to take notes that would have enabled him to reproduce almost word for word in his leisure moments what Charlemagne had actually said.

As a result of Einhard's work we know the intimate details of Charlemagne's life better than of any other historical character in the Middle Ages. Einhard himself as a writer furnishes a striking demonstration of how the educated man of the eighth century could express himself in prose. He is simple and direct, yet picturesque, and the account that he gives of the great Charles could not have been bettered at any time in history. The broad-minded Emperor of many interests could not have found a better biographer. There is an intimate personal touch that enables us to see Charlemagne not only as a great ruler but as a man very humanly interesting and intent on having the men around him, and above all the nobility of the rising generation on whom so much depended for the future of civilization, occupied with the development of their minds as well as their bodies.

One incident of Charlemagne's life, as detailed for us by Einhard, will give the best possible illustration at once of his style as a writer and his power as a biographer. Einhard tells how:—

"After a long absence the most victorious Charles returned into Gaul and caused the children (mainly of his attendants at court) whom he had left with Clement as his pupils, to be brought before him. He required them to be examined and was amazed at the commendable progress of the poorer class of

children whose written productions (that would seem to be the medieval phrase for examination papers) were the most creditable to them. On the other hand those of noble parentage, sometimes even illustrious families, showed very poor specimens of their skill. The great Emperor then set the good scholars on his right hand and the bad on his left saying: 'I praise you much, dear children, for your excellent efforts, and desire you to continue so that you may attain unto perfection; then I intend to give you rich bishoprics, or splendid abbeys, and shall ever regard you as persons of merit.' Then he turned in anger to those on his left, who trembled at his frowns and the sound of his voice, which resembled the roll of thunder, as he cried out to them: 'Look here, ye scions of the best nobility, ye pampered ones, who, trusting to your birth or fortune, have disobeyed me, and instead of studying, as you were bound and I expected you to do, have wasted your time in idleness, on play, luxury, or unprofitable occupation.' He then took his accustomed oath, and with uplifted head and arm, said in a voice of thunder: 'By the king of heaven, let others admire you as much as they please; as for me, I set little store by your birth or beauty; understand ye and remember it well, that unless you give heed speedily to amend your past negligence by diligent study, you will never obtain anything from Charles.' "

Quite as significant as Einhard's life of Charlemagne is Joinville's *"Histoire de St. Louis,"* the well known life of Louis IX of France. The biographer had been with Louis on the seventh crusade and spent six years in Egypt and Syria. His material was at first hand as that of Einhard and the life sketch he wrote is one of the precious biographical treasures of all time. It contains a vivid portrait of Louis IX made by a man who knew him well personally, and took part with him in some of the important actions described in the book. Those who think that rapid, picturesque description such as vividly recalls deeds of battle was reserved for the modern war correspondent should read certain portions of Joinville's book.

As the seneschal of Champagne, Joinville was on intimate terms with the nobility of the time and therefore played no minor rôle in the actions. An example of his style and of the way in which he presents his historical material will be best obtained from the paragraph in which the seneschal historian himself recounts the story of his exploits in the famous battle of Mansoura at which the Count of Soissons and Pierre de Neuville defended a small bridge against the enemy under a hail of arrows. He says:

"Before us there were two sergeants of the king, one of whom was William de Boon and the other John of Gamaches. Against these the Turks who had placed themselves between the river and the little tributary, led a whole mob of villains on foot, who hurled at them clods of turf or whatever came to hand. Never could they make them recoil upon us, however. As a last resort the Turks sent forward a foot soldier who three times launched Greek fire at them. Once William de Boon received the pot of green fire upon his buckler. If the fire had touched anything on him he would have been entirely burned up. We at the rear were all covered by arrows which had missed the Sergeants. It happened that I found a waistcoat which had been stuffed by one of the Saracens. I turned the open side of it towards me and made a shield out of the vest which rendered me great service, for I was wounded by their arrows in only five places though my horse was wounded in fifteen. One of my own men brought me a banner with my arms and a lance. Every time then that we saw that they were pressing the Royal Sergeants, we charged upon them and they fled. The good Count Soissons, from the point at which we were, joked with me and said 'Seneschal, let us hoot out this rabble, for by the headdress of God (this was his favorite oath) we shall talk over this day you and I many a time in our ladies' halls.' "

Fortunately, medieval biography was not limited to the lives of kings and emperors, but took for subject also the careers of men and women of lesser importance whose

lives were, however, of special significance. By far, the largest number of biographies consisted of lives of the saints, but there were many others that have been preserved for us and some of them are looked upon as classics in their way.

One of the greatest of the medieval biographies is Jocelyn of Brakelond's "Life of Abbot Sampson." Carlyle in "Past and Present" can scarcely find words strong enough to express his unstinted admiration for this life. Almost needless to say, Carlyle was not easy to please and it is gratifying to find that there was one work of this kind that entirely satisfied him. Jocelyn's simple and straightforward story gives an extremely vivid picture not only of the abbot and his ways in his relations to all those around him, but also of the times in which he lived and the condition that obtained in the various countries.

A specimen of his work will serve to show the merit of his style. After reading it, one is not likely to be surprised that Carlyle should so have taken the chronicler to heart, nor that he was so enthusiastic in his praise. Jocelyn furnishes a striking example of that realistic impressionism in style that has once more in the course of time become the fad of our own day:

"The abbot was informed that the church of Woolpit was vacant, Walter of Coustances being chosen to the bishopric of Lincoln. He presently convened the prior and great part of the convent, and taking up his story thus began: 'You well know what trouble I had in respect of the church of Woolpit; and in order that it should be obtained for your exclusive use I journeyed to Rome at your instance, in the time of the schism between Pope Alexander and Octavian. I passed through Italy at that time when all clerks bearing letters of our lord the Pope Alexander were taken. Some were imprisoned, some hanged,

and some, with nose and lips cut off, sent forward to the pope, to his shame and confusion. I, however, pretended to be Scotch; and putting on the garb of a Scotchman, and the gesture of one, I often brandished my staff, in the way they use that weapon called a gaveloc, at those who mocked me, using threatening language, after the manner of the Scotch. To those that met and questioned me as to who I was, I answered nothing, but, "Ride ride Rome, turne Cantwereberei." This did I to conceal myself and my errand, and that I should get to Rome safer in the guise of a Scotchman.

" 'Having obtained letters from the pope, even as I wished, on my return I passed by a certain castle, as my way led me from the city; and behold the officers thereof came about me, laying hold upon me and saying, "This vagabond who makes himself out to be a Scotchman is either a spy or bears letters from the false pope Alexander." And while they examined my ragged clothes, and my boots, and my breeches, and even the old shoes which I carried over my shoulders, after the fashion of the Scotch, I thrust my hand into the little wallet which I carried, wherein was contained the letter of our lord the pope, placed under a little cup I had for drinking. The Lord God and St. Edmund so permitting, I drew out both the letter and the cup together, so that, extending my arm aloft, I held the letter underneath the cup. They could see the cup plain enough, but they did not see the letter; and so I got clear out of their hands, in the name of the Lord. Whatever money I had about me they took away; therefore I had to beg from door to door, without any payment, until I arrived in England.' "

A characteristic example of the naïve, simple biographic prose of the later Middle Ages is to be found in the work known as the *Fioretti,* or the "Little Flowers of St. Francis," a book written some time during the fourteenth century. The story of how the seventeen-year-old girl, Clare, insisted on leaving her home and following St. Francis as she saw so many of the young men of the time doing, is well known. Francis had to find a place for her and so there came the foundation of the second order

of St. Francis, the Poor Clares. Her family opposed her resolution to live the simple life and considered that a daughter of theirs must not be allowed to take up with the ideas of a wandering preacher who, at that time, was looked on not a little askance by the regular religious authorities and whose rags and poverty made him anything but the proper associate for a young lady of noble birth.

When a special convent home was provided for Clare and some other young women who had become enamored of the life of poverty and simplicity, Clare's sister, Agnes, came as a postulant. By this time, apparently, the family had become reconciled to Clare's absence from home, but they would not stand another daughter following such a foolish example. Accordingly Agnes was removed from the convent by force after a scene which caused the greatest excitement in the little town. It was not long, however, before Agnes returned to the convent and within a few years their mother followed them, and became one of the most fervent members of the little community. The peace and happiness that came with this life of absolute poverty soon attracted many other women and Clare was asked to establish houses at a distance. Gradually the order of Poor Clares, the second order of St. Francis, thus came into existence. When it was necessary to draw up constitutions for the order, Clare showed not only the breadth of her intelligence, but the depth of her knowledge of human nature, and her appreciation of what was absolutely necessary in order to keep her order from degeneration. Against the counsels of all the ecclesiastics of her time, including many cardinals

and even a pope, she insisted on the most absolute poverty as the only basis for the preservation of the spirit of her second order of St. Francis. Her character was well manifested in this contest from which she came out victorious.

To know how much of happiness there came to her in life, one should read the famous passage which describes her visit to St. Francis, and how she and he, with sisters and brothers around them, "broke bread together, with a sweetness that was beyond human." The passage is to be found in the "Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi," which was written within a century after the occurrences described:

"When came the day ordained by Francis, Saint Clare with one companion passed forth from out the convent and with the companions of Saint Francis to bear her company came unto Saint Mary of the Angels, and devoutly saluted the Virgin Mary before her altar, where she had been shorn and veiled; so they conducted her to see the house, until such time as the hour for breaking bread was come. And in the meantime Saint Francis let make ready the table on the bare ground, as he was wont to do. And the hour of breaking bread being come, they set themselves down together, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, and one of the companions of Saint Francis with the companion of Saint Clare, and all the other companions took each his place at the table with all humility. And at the first dish, Saint Francis began to speak of God so sweetly, so sublimely and so wondrously, that the fulness of Divine grace came down on them, and they all were wrapt in God. And as they were thus wrapt, with eyes and hands uplift to heaven, the folk of Assisi and Bettona and the country round about, saw that Saint Mary of the Angels, and all the House, and the wood that was just hard by the House, were burning brightly, and it seemed as it were a great fire that filled the church and the House and the whole wood together: for the which cause the folk of Assisi ran thither in great haste to quench the flames, believing of a truth that the whole place was all on fire. But coming closer

up to the House and finding no fire at all, they entered within and found Saint Francis and Saint Clare and all their company in contemplation wrapt in God and sitting around that humble board. Whereby of a truth they understood that this had been a heavenly flame and no earthly one at all, which God had let appear miraculously, for to show and signify the fire of love divine wherewith the souls of those holy brothers and holy nuns were all aflame; wherefor they got them gone with great consolation in their hearts and with holy edifying. Then after some long space, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, together with all the others, returning to themselves again and feeling of good comfort from the spiritual food took little heed of the food of the body."

CHAPTER XVIII

Books of Travel

THE exploration of distant countries would seem to have been almost impossible in the Middle Ages because of the insufficient means of transportation. This has never proved a barrier to distant travel, however, and men have always been interested in getting in touch with people who had manners and customs different from their own. Some of them have always had the "Wanderlust" and wanted to travel far afield and see what their fellows had not seen. They delighted in the prospect of being able to tell their untraveled fellow beings what they had seen. Books of travel have always delighted the young but they have also often caught the fancies of the old. Men read them with avidity but women also are very much taken with them. It is sometimes said that Homer's *Iliad*, with its stories of fighting, was meant more for the men, while the *Odyssey* with its tales of distant travel, and a husband who returns to his home after years of wandering, was written more particularly for the women of Greece.

The medieval period, though the men of that time are sometimes said to have been lacking in curiosity, produced a number of these travel books which have come, as time has gone on, to be more and more thought of as genuine sources of information with regard to distant lands and peoples. The surprise indeed is how much these men accomplished in exploration in spite of all the han-

dicaps to which they were subjected. We are inclined to think of our knowledge of the East as well as of Africa coming in very modern times. As a matter of fact, however, all portions of the East were explored, the Dominions and the Capital of Genghis Khan were visited and described, Lhasa, the sacred city of the Llamas was entered, and the greater part of China thoroughly explored by travelers of the Middle Ages whose books still remain as convincing evidence of the great work that they accomplished.

The greatest of these explorers was undoubtedly Marco Polo, whose book was for so long considered to be mainly made up of imaginary descriptions of things and places never seen. The development of modern geographic science by organized travel and government expeditions has proved Marco Polo's book to be one of the most valuable contributions to this department of knowledge ever made. It took many centuries for Marco Polo to come into his own in this respect but we are making up for the neglect in our day. The great Venetian traveler, after all, suffered only the same fate as Herodotus of whom Voltaire sneered two centuries ago, " 'Father of History?' Say, rather, 'Father of Lies.' "

In his "Lives of Celebrated Travelers," James Augustus St. John states the striking change of mind which has come in the modern time with regard to Marco Polo:

"When the travels of Marco Polo first appeared, they were generally regarded as fiction; and as this absurd belief had so far gained ground, that when he lay upon his deathbed, his friends and nearest relatives, coming to take their eternal adieu, conjured him as he valued the

salvation of his soul, to retract whatever he had advanced in his book, or at least many such passages as every person looked upon as untrue; but the traveler whose conscience was untouched upon that score, declared solemnly, in that awful moment, that far from being guilty of exaggeration, he had not described one-half of the wonderful things which he had beheld. Such was the reception which the discoveries of this extraordinary man experienced when first promulgated. By degrees, however, as enterprise lifted more and more the veil from Central and Eastern Asia, the relations of our traveler rose in the estimation of geographers; and now that the world—though containing many unknown tracts—has been more successfully explored, we begin to perceive that Marco Polo, like Herodotus, was a man of the most rigid veracity, whose testimony presumptuous ignorance alone can call in question."

Some of Marco Polo's observations were marvelously acute and he was especially intent on possible practical applications of the things that he saw to the solution of various problems in Europe. Here, for instance, is his description of petroleum as he saw it:

"On the north of Armenia is found a fountain from which a liquor-like oil flows which though unprofitable for the seasoning of meat (olive oil was used for this purpose and indeed this was one of its main modes of employment) is good for burning (both light and heat) and for annointing camels afflicted with the mange (vaseline or petroleum jelly is still used for external application in certain of the skin affections of men and animals). This oil flows constantly and copiously so that camels are laden with it."

Another passage is with regard to coal, evidently hard

coal, since kindled at night it would keep fire until the morning:

"Through the whole Province of Cathay," Marco Polo says, "certain black stones are dug from the mountains, which, put into the fire, burn like wood, and being kindled, preserve fire a long time, and if they be kindled in the evening they keep fire all the night."

Another important mineral product, which even more than petroleum or coal is supposed to be essentially modern in its employment, is asbestos. Polo, who had not only seen this, but had realized exactly what its valuable quality was, had found out its origin and had recognized its principal use. Curiously enough he attempts to explain the origin of a peculiar usage of the word salamander (the salamander having been supposed to be an animal which was not injured by fire) by reference to the incombustibility of asbestos. While discoursing about Dsungaria, Polo says:

"And you must know that in the mountain there is a substance from which Salamander is made. The real truth is that the Salamander is no beast as they allege in our part of the world, but is a substance found in the earth. Everybody must be aware that it can be no animal's nature to live in fire seeing that every animal is composed of all the four elements. Now I, Marco Polo, had a Turkish acquaintance who related that he had lived three years in that region on behalf of the Great Khan, in order to procure these salamanders for him. He said that the way they got them was by digging in that mountain till they found a certain vein. The substance of this vein was taken and crushed, and when so treated it divides, as it were, into fibres of wool, which they set forth to dry. When dry these fibres were pounded in a copper mortar and then washed so as to remove all the earth and to leave only the fibres, like fibres of wool. These were then spun and made into napkins."

Needless to say this is an excellent description of the preparation of asbestos.

A series of friars went on long journeys in the latter part of the Middle Ages to distant countries and especially into Asia for missionary purposes. Some of them wrote accounts of their travels that have proved most interesting in the modern time. In the thirteenth century Friar William de Rubruquis was sent partly as an ambassador and partly as an explorer by King Louis IX of France into Tartary. At that time the descendants of Ghengis Khan ruled over an immense empire in the Orient and King Louis was deeply interested in introducing Christianity to the East. About this time a rumor spread throughout Europe that one of the nephews of the great Khan had embraced Christianity. St. Louis thought this a favorable opportunity of getting in touch with the Eastern potentate and so he dispatched at least two missions into Tartary at the head of the second of which was William of Rubruk.

Friar William published the account of his travels and his work was not unappreciated by his contemporaries and even its scientific value was thoroughly realized. Roger Bacon made frequent and copious quotations from it in the geographical section of his *Opus Majus*. Here is William's description of the women of the Tartars as it was written at the request of "his most sovereign and most Christian lord, Louis, by God's grace the renowned King of France." It shows that fashion has always been a tyrant and that no absurdity was too great to be adopted if it were once given a vogue:

"Moreover their women's garments differ not from their

men's, saving they are somewhat longer. But on the morrow after one of their women is married, she shaves her scalp from the midst of her head down to her forehead, and wears a wide garment like unto the hood of a nun, yea larger and longer in all parts than a nun's hood, being open before and girt unto them under the right side. For herein do the Tartars differ from the Turks, because the Turks fasten their garments to their bodies on the left side; but the Tartars always on the right side.

"They have also an ornament for their heads which they call *botta,* being made of the bark of a tree, or of some such other lighter matter as they can find, which by reason of the thickness and roundness thereof cannot be holden but in both hands together: and it hath a square sharp spire rising from the top thereof, being more than a cubit (twenty inches) in length, and fashioned like unto a pinnacle. The said *botta* they cover all over with a piece of rich silk: and it is hollow within: and upon the midst of the said spire or square top, they put a bunch of quills or of slender canes a cubit long and more: and the said bunch, on the top thereof, they beautify with peacocks' feathers, and round about all the length thereof, with the feathers of a mallard's tail, and with precious stones also. Great ladies wear this kind of ornament upon their heads, binding it strongly with a certain hat or coif, which hath an hole in the crown, fit for the spire to come through it: and under the foresaid ornament they cover the hairs of their heads, which they gather up round together from the hinder part thereof to the crown, and so lap them up in a knot or bundle within the said botta, which afterward they bind strongly under their throats.

"Hereupon when a great company of such gentlewomen ride together, and are beheld afar off, they seem to be soldiers with helmets on their heads carrying lances upright; for the said *botta* appeareth like an helmet with a lance over it. All their women sit on horseback bestriding their horses like men: and they bind their hoods or gowns about their waists with a sky-coloured silk scarf, and with another scarf they gird it above their breasts; and they bind also a piece of white silk like a muffler or mask under their eyes, reaching down unto their breast. These gentlewomen are exceeding fat, and the lesser their noses be, the fairer are they esteemed: they daub over their sweet faces with grease too shamefully.

"The duties of the women are, to drive carts: to lay their houses upon carts and to take them down again: to milk kine: to make butter and gry-ut (cheese): to dress skins and to sew them, which they usually sew with thread made of sinews, for they divide sinews into slender threads, and then twine them into one long thread. They make sandals and socks and other garments.

"Howbeit they never wash any apparel; for they say that God is then angry, and that dreadful thunder will ensue, if washed garments be hanged forth to dry: yea, they beat such as wash, and take their garments from them. They are wonderfully afraid of thunder: for in the time of thunder they thrust all strangers out of their houses, and then wrapping themselves in black felt, they lie hidden therein, till the thunder be overpast.

"They never wash their dishes or bowls: yea, when their flesh is sodden, they wash the platter wherein it must be put, with scalding hot broth out of the pot, and then pour the said broth into the pot again. They make felt also, and cover their houses therewith.

"The duties of the men are to make bows and arrows, stirrups, bridles and saddles: to build houses and carts, to keep horses: to milk mares: to churn cosmos and mares' milk, and to make bags wherein to put it: they keep camels also and lay burdens upon them. As for sheep and goats they tend and milk them, as well the men as the women. With sheep's milk thickened and salted they dress and tan their hides."

The other great medieval friar traveler was Odoric who visited India and also China. He sailed from the Hindustan Peninsula in a Chinese junk to Sumatra, visiting various points on the northern coast of that island and describing the inhabitants and the customs of the country. According to Sir Henry Yule, the distinguished modern traveler and geographer, he then visited Java and it would also seem that he touched the coast of Borneo finally reaching Canton. He found two houses of his order already in China and on his journey home Sir

Henry Yule is quite confident that he passed through Thibet and visited Lhasa. Thence he seems to have passed through Khorasan and probably Tabriz to Europe.

It only remains to complete the interest of Odoric's wondrous tale to add that during these years of long journeys his companion was Friar James, an Irishman, who had been attracted to Italy and there had become a Franciscan. On their return Friar James was presented with a substantial sum of money by the municipality of Udine in Italy because he had been "for the love of God and of Odoric (a typical Celtic expression and characteristic) a faithful companion of the Blessed Odoric in his wanderings." Unfortunately Odoric died within two years after his return though not until the story of his travels had been taken down in homely Latin by Friar William of Bologna. To that good fortune we owe the journal of Friar Odoric translated into French by Sir John Mandeville and thence into homely old-fashioned English.

Here is Odoric's description of the people of certain parts of Asia with whom he had been brought in contact:

"This people worshippeth also a dead idol, which, from the middle upward, resembleth a man, and from the middle downward an ox. The very same idol delivers oracles unto them, and sometimes requireth the blood of forty virgins for his hire. And therefore the men of that region do consecrate their daughters and their sons unto their idols, even as Christians do their children unto some religion or saint in heaven. Likewise they sacrifice their sons and their daughters, and so, much people is put to death before the said idol by reason of that accursed ceremony. Also many other heinous and abominable villainies doth that brutish, beastly people commit: and I saw many more strange things among them which I mean not here to insert.

Another most vile custom the foresaid nation doth retain: for when any man dieth they burn his dead corpse to ashes: and if his wife surviveth him, her they burn quick (alive), because (say they) she shall accompany her husband in his tilthe (soil tilling) and husbandry, when he is come into a new world. Howbeit the said wife having children by her husband, may if she will, remain still alive with them, without shame or reproach; notwithstanding, for the most part, they all of them make choice to be burnt with their husbands.

"Now, albeit the wife dieth before her husband, that law bindeth not the husband to such inconvenience, but he may marry another wife also. Likewise, the said nation, hath another strange custom, in that their women drink wine, but their men do not. Also the women have the lids and brows of their eyes and beards shaven, but their men have not: with many other base and filthy fashiones which the said women do use contrary to the nature of their sex. From that kingdom I travelled ten days' journey unto another kingdom called Mobar, which containeth many cities. Within a certain church of the same country, the body of Saint Thomas the apostle is interred, the very same church being full of idols: and in fifteen houses round about the said church, there dwell certain priests who are Nestorians, that is to say, false, and bad Christians, and schismatics.

"In the said Kingdom of Mobar there is a wonderful strange idol, being made after the shape and resemblance of a man, as big as the image of our Christopher, and consisting all of most pure and glittering gold. And about the neck thereof hangeth a silk ribbon, full of most rich and precious stones, some one of which is of more value than a whole kingdom. The house of this idol is all of beaten gold, namely the roof, the pavement, and the ceiling of the wall within and without. Unto this idol the Indians go on pilgrimage, as we do unto St. Peter's. Some go with halters about their necks, some with their hands bound behind them, some other with knives sticking on their arms or legs; and if after their peregrination, the flesh of their wounded arm festereth or corrupteth, they esteem their limb to be holy, and think that their god is well pleased with them."

A third great Franciscan traveler was Friar John of Carpini, the author of a wonderful account of what he

had seen in northern Asia. In 1245 Pope Innocent IV sometime after the Mongolian invasion of eastern Europe resolved to send a mission to the Tartar monarch and John of Carpini was selected for the head of the dangerous expedition. The information obtained on this journey, Friar John embodied in a book called *Liber Tartarorum.* This attracted attention at once and many details from it were inserted in the "Mirrors" of Vincent of Beauvais which was written shortly after the middle of the thirteenth century. At the end of the sixteenth century, Hakluyt published portions of the original work, as did Borgeron at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Geographical Society of Paris published a fine edition of the work about the middle of the nineteenth century. Friar Salimbene who met Odoric in France the year of his return, 1247, tells us that "Friar John of Carpini was a clever and conversable man, well lettered, a great discourser and full of diversity of experience."

These travelers had the satisfaction of attracting wide attention from their contemporaries, but what is noteworthy for our time is that they have never ceased to be of interest and their books have been issued in edition after edition down the centuries. These pioneers are counted by modern travelers as worthy representatives of their guild.

From a Medieval Edition of the Bible

CHAPTER XIX

"The Imitation of Christ"

IN 1921 the announcement was made that Harvard University, on the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the death of Thomas à Kempis, had been the successful bidder, at a substantial price, for a library of volumes, all of them connected in some way with the author of "The Imitation of Christ." This gave Harvard the best collection of books relating to Thomas à Kempis in the world. Not a few who read the announcement were inclined to wonder why Harvard should be so anxious to possess these volumes about, and editions of a work, the author of which first saw the light more than five hundred years before. For those who knew even a little about à Kempis, the reason for Harvard's readiness to make a considerable sacrifice in order to obtain all the available material with regard to him was very clear. While à Kempis died in 1471 he was over ninety years of age at the time and most of his life had been lived in the Middle Ages. His great book, "The Imitation of Christ," is not medieval in any sense of the word because it is universal, but it could only have been produced by a man who was deeply steeped in the traditions of the medieval period.

Thomas à Kempis was an Augustinian monk who belonged to the same order as Abbot Mendel, the great discoverer of the laws of heredity in our generation. The five hundred years that separate the two men are probably

an index of the fact that at any time during this long period the order might very well have been the nursing mother of genius, though very seldom are two such great geniuses connected by any bond so close as this. When à Kempis died he had spent seventy years of life in the monastery of St. Agnes in the Rhineland. The fact that so much of his life was spent within monastery walls would seem to many people to make it almost impossible that he should compose a work which would continue to attract the attention of men for a dozen of generations, but ever so many other men have, from within their monastery enclosure, and sometimes after many years there, stirred the world deeply. Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ" is the most read book after the Scriptures in our modern European libraries. Altogether something like seven thousand editions of it are said to have been issued. Only the work of a genius could have been as popular as this, century after century, and so far from its popularity being at an end it continues to be the book to which scholarly men, though also the doers of great things in human history, turn as their forbears did, with a feeling that is almost reverential.

There has been question as to whether the "Imitation of Christ" was really written by Thomas à Kempis, but that question has now, I think, been definitely settled. Everything points to the authorship by the brother of the Common Life, who was born in the little town of Kempen and lived some seventy years in the Monastery of St. Agnes, acting as spiritual adviser to his brethren, giving them consolation and advice in times of trial, directing their thoughts always to the higher life. There are

many Flemicisms, that is, Latin usages which were common in the Netherlands of this time, in most of the manuscripts. It has been argued that since these do not exist in all the manuscripts, the argument founded on them is not absolute. The preponderance of evidence, however, is for the Flemish copies as being nearer the original, and the absence of these special modes of expression in other manuscripts only indicates that a great many copyists of the time, particularly in Italy and France, were quite aware of these imperfections of language and endeavored to correct them out of their better knowledge of Latin. This only serves to show how little the style of the book had to do with its popularity and that it was the thought that appealed to the world of the time and has continued ever since to give the work wide popularity.

The book did not spring into popularity at once, though it was not long after copies of it began to be circulated before it was known and valued by chosen spirits in many places. Some of the greatest of the men of the time learned to appreciate it. It is a vivid testimony to the fact that à Kempis himself first did and then taught that he cared so little for the reputation attached to his work, that his name was not directly associated with it, and in the course of time there came to be some doubt about its authorship. "If thou wilt profitably know and learn," he had said, "desire to be unknown." It is one of the most difficult of tasks, but the humble brother of the Common Life who had written a sublimely beautiful book had learned it. He had written other books, indeed there are probably at least a dozen attributed to him on reasonably good evidence, yet he had said, "In general

we all need to be silent more than to speak, there are few who are too slow to speak." None of his other books are quite equal to the "Imitation," yet some of them, as "The Little Garden of Roses" and "The Valley of Lilies," are well worth reading and exhibit many of the traits of charming simplicity, marvelous insight and psychological intuition that have given his greatest work its reputation.

All down the centuries since, men have admired and praised the "Imitation." It has not been a classic in the sense of a book that everyone praises and very few read, but on the contrary it has been the familiar reading of a great many of the chosen spirits among mankind ever since. To have been the favorite book of Sir Thomas More, Bossuet and Massillon, of Loyola and Bellarmine, of John Wesley, Samuel Johnson, Lamartine, La Harpe, Michelet, Leibnitz and Villemain is indeed a distinction. Nor has it appealed only to Christians, for men like Renan and Comte almost in our own time have praised it very highly. Far from its reading being confined to scholars by profession or those much occupied with the things of the spirit, we find that it was the favorite reading of General Chinese Gordon, General Wolseley, the German Emperor Frederick the Good, and Stanley the explorer. George Eliot shows her deep appreciation of it in "The Mill on the Floss," where she says that "It works miracles to this day, turning bitter waters into sweetness." Sir James Stephen speaks of it as a work "which could not fail to attract notice and which commended itself to all souls driven to despair." The late Lord Russell of Killowen always carried a copy of it with him and

used to read a chapter in it every day quite as Ignatius of Loyola had done three centuries and a half before. The frequent surprise is the contrast of the men devoted to it. Pobiedonostseff, the head of the Holy Russian Synod, the power behind the Czar for so long, used to read in it every day.

St. Francis de Sales said of "The Imitation": "Its author is the Holy Spirit." Pascal said of it: "One expects only a book and finds a man." De Quincey declared, "Next to the Bible in European publicity and currency this book came forward as an answer to the sighing of Christian Europe for light from heaven." Dr. Samuel Johnson declared that "Thomas à Kempis' must be a good book, as the world has opened its arms to receive it." The sentence in it which he repeated most frequently and which evidently had come home to him is *"Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be."* Matthew Arnold, whose attitude toward religion might possibly be expected to bias his judgment with regard to it and whose feeling for style might be supposed to be shocked by its lack of finish in language, hailed the "Imitation" as: "The most exquisite document after those of the New Testament of all that the Christian spirit has ever inspired." What may be more surprising to some, he even did not hesitate to compare it with his favorite authors; "Its moral precepts are equal to the best ever furnished by the great masters of morals—Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius."

Some of the expressions used with regard to the "Imitation" are among the most laudatory that have ever been

used of any book. They come from men of all kinds, in all generations, in all nations since, and many of them among the most respected of their time. Fontenelle declared the "Imitation" "the finest book ever issued from the hand of man." Caro, the French philosopher, compares it with other books famous in the same ethical line, only to put it on a pinnacle by itself. "Open the 'Imitation,' he says, "after having read the 'De Officiis' of Cicero or the 'Enchiridion' of Epictetus, and you will feel yourself transported into another world as in a moment." Lamennais declared that the "Imitation" "has made more saints than all the books of controversy. The more one reads, the more one marvels. There is something celestial in the simplicity of this wonderful book." Henri Martin, the French historian, declared, "This book has not grown old and never will grow old, because it is the expression of the eternal tenderness of the soul. It has been the consolation of thousands—one might say of millions—of souls."

Lamartine in his "Jocelyn" (and it must not be forgotten that Lamartine was an historian and a critic as well as a poet) wrote:

> "Harrassed by an inward strife,
> I find in the 'Imitation' a new life—
> Book obscure, unhonored, like to potter's clay,
> Yet rich in Gospel truths as flowers in May.
> Where loftiest wisdom, human and Divine,
> Peace to the troubled soul to speak, combine."

La Harpe, a dramatist as well as a critic, whose *Cours de Littérature"* was a standard text-book for so long, was in prison and sadly in need of comfort and consolation

when he began to appreciate the "Imitation." There is almost no limit to his praise of it, and praise under these circumstances must indeed be considered to come from the heart. He wrote: "Never before or since have I experienced emotion so violent and yet so unexpectedly sweet—the words, 'Behold I am here,' echoing unceasingly in my heart, awakening its faculties and moving it to the uttermost depths."

It is not surprising then to find that Dean Church says of it, "No book of human composition has been the companion of so many serious hours, has been prized in widely different religious communions, has nerved and comforted so many and such different minds—preacher and soldier and solitary thinker—Christians, or even it may be those unable to believe." Dean Milman, in his "Latin Christianity" declared, "that this book supplies some imperious want in the Christianity of mankind, that it supplies it with a fulness and felicity which leaves nothing to be desired; its boundless popularity is the one unanswerable testimony." He even has some words of praise for à Kempis' style: "The style is ecclesiastical Latin, but the perfection of ecclesiastical Latin of pure and of sound construction." Dean Plumptre, whose studies of Dante and the great Greek poets gave him so good a right to judge of the place of books in the world's literature, is one of the worshippers at the shrine of the "Imitation." The Rev. Dr. Liddon, distinguished English scholar, called it "the very choicest of devotional works, the product of the highest Christian genius and one of the books that have touched the heart of the world."

More than this could scarcely be said of any book. Was

there ever a chorus of praise quite so harmonious? Did praise ever come from men by whom one could more wish to be praised? Evidently, the "Imitation of Christ" is for all men at all times. It is the poem of our common human nature.

When Sir John Lubbock included the "Imitation" in his list of the hundred best books some people expressed surprise. The editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* invited the opinions of his readers on the subject, and some of the most distinguished of English churchmen, as well as many English men of distinction, said their praise of it publicly. Archdeacon Farrar, whose sympathies with the fourth book of the "Imitation" would certainly be very slight and whose opposition to many Catholic doctrines that à Kempis received devoutly might possibly be expected to prejudice him against it, wrote that "If all the books in the world were in a blaze the first twelve I should snatch from the flames would be the Bible, 'The Imitation of Christ,' 'Homer,' 'Æschylus,' 'Thucydides,' 'Tacitus,' 'Virgil,' 'Marcus Aurelius,' 'Dante,' 'Shakespeare,' 'Milton' and 'Wordsworth.'" The men with whom à Kempis is thus placed in association are among the accepted geniuses of literary history before as well as since his time.

It would not be difficult to make a further sheaf of quotations gathered without exception from all manner of men, devout and undevout, bookish and practical, spiritual and worldly, men of wide experience in life, who have done things that the world will not soon forget, and who, if any, have the right to speak for the race as regards the significance of life and what any book can

mean for direction and guidance in the living of it and consolation in its trials and difficulties.

Lamartine in his *Entretiens Familiers* called it "the poem of the soul," and declared that it "condensed into a few pages the practical philosophy of men of all climates and of all countries who have sought, have suffered, have studied and prayed in their tears ever since flesh suffered and the mind reflected."

To adopt his term, the "Imitation" is literally a great poem. It is a creation and it is a vision. The poet is the creator and the seer. The greater he is, the more capable he is of taking the ordinary materials of life and making great poetry of them. The greater the poet, the more of mankind he appeals to. It is the vision of the experiences of man and not of individual men that the poet sees. What all have seen and felt, but none so well expressed is the theme of poetry. The more one reads of the "Imitation," the more one realizes all the truth of this characterization of it as poetry. If one takes passages of it as they have been put into rhythmic sentences the feeling of the poetry in them is brought home very clearly. For instance, this from Chapter XXII of the third book:

> Why one has less, another more;
> Not ours to question this, but Thine
> With Whom each man's deserts are strictly watched.
> Wherefore, Lord God, I think it a great blessing
> Not to have much which outwardly seems worth
> Praise or glory—as men judge of them.

Or if the ode—for such it really is—on Love from the fifth chapter of the third book be read alongside one of the great choruses from the Greek tragedians, as above

all some of those of Sophocles in "Antigone" or the "Œdipus at Colonos," the lofty poetic quality will be easier to grasp:

A great thing is love,
A great good every way.
Making all burdens light,
Bearing all that is unequal,
Carrying a burden without feeling it,
Turning all bitterness to a sweet savor.
The noble love of Jesus
Impelleth men to good deeds
And exciteth them always
To desire that which is better.
Love will tend upwards
Nor be detained
By things of earth
It would be free.

Nothing is sweeter than love,
Nothing stronger, nothing higher,
Nothing fuller, nothing better
Nor more pleasant in heaven or earth.
For love is born of God
Nor can it rest
Except in Him
Above all things created.

Love is swift, sincere,
Pious, pleasant and delightsome,
Brave, patient, faithful,
Careful, long suffering, manly,
Never seeking its own good;
For where a man looks for himself
He falls away from love.

The "Imitation" is not, as we have said, à Kempis' only book. We have a series of nearly a dozen volumes from

his hand, some of them consisting of lives of the Brethren of the Common Life or the chronicles of his monastery and some of the smaller ones very much in the temper of the "Imitation of Christ." The best known of these are "The Soliloquy of the Soul," "The Little Garden of Roses," and "The Valley of Lilies." "The Soliloquy of the Soul" consists of nearly a hundred pages of a good-sized book, more than twenty-five thousand words very probably. "The Valley of Lilies" has some fifty pages and "The Little Garden of Roses" about half as much. Here is a chapter from "The Little Garden of Roses" called "On Bearing One Another's Burthens" which shows very clearly that it was not in the "Imitation of Christ" alone that à Kempis wrote with supreme simplicity and unction:

"As we all are but one body in Christ, so we ought to be knit in the bonds of brotherly charity and peace, and to consent together in the pursuit of virtue.

"We are all members of Christ, regenerated by the grace of the Holy Spirit; redeemed by the passion of Christ; purified by the blood of Christ; fed by the body of Christ; instructed by the words of Christ; confirmed by the miracles of Christ; and led to virtue by the example of Christ: why then would you seek to hurt one another?

"My brethren, he that offers an affront to his brother, be it in word or deed, offers an affront to Christ; and He shall Himself avenge and punish it, if the wrong he has done be not speedily repaired.

"We all have God for our Father in Heaven; we are consequently all brethren in Christ, whatever be the country or state which gave us birth, and whether we be of low or noble blood.

"One God has made us all; it is the same God who preserves and governs us; it is the same God who calls us, who daily calls us still, by His word from without, by contrition from within, to the same beatitude. It is the same God, who promises to manifest Himself eternally to us, in the presence of His angels,

and to be our eternal recompense, in the universal blessedness of all the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom.

"Since we are all the servants of the same God, redeemed by the same price, sanctified by the same Spirit, let it be our constant endeavor to love and serve one another.

"If we would be pleasing to Christ, 'let us bear one another's burthens,' for Christ's love; and let us pray one for another in charity, for God is equally in each of us, and each of us in Him.

"Whatever imperfection or folly we observe in our brethren, we ought piously to excuse them, as we would that they would excuse us.

"Beloved brother, bear with others, and they will bear with you; excuse, and you will be excused; pity the weaknesses of the sinner, and you will be pitied; comfort the afflicted, and you shall be comforted; raise up him that falls, and you shall be yourself raised up by the help of God.

"Verily just is the retribution of Divine justice, which says, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.'

"Be not astonished, nor indignant, if man, who is frail, fall in this world; angels fell in heaven; and Adam, in the earthly paradise, did not resist the attraction of a pitiful apple.

"A very little thing often tempts a man violently; and a trifle that hardly deserves notice often grievously affects him. God justly permits this to be so, to teach us that if we do not resist small trials, we cannot overcome great ones.

"Be full of indulgence and kindness to your brother when he is tempted; and pray for him when he is in tribulation.

"The good which happens to you, becomes mine, when I rejoice with you for it, and your misfortunes are mine, when I pity those in them; for all men are frail, and therefore it is the duty of all charitably to pray one for another.

"We must not upbraid others with defects, and despise them for such, when we overlook the like in ourselves; for it would be as a blind man mocking the blind, or the deaf him that cannot hear, or a fool that laughs at a fool.

"Never speak to the disadvantage of one over whose conduct you have no charge; look rather to yourself, and repair the evil you find there.

"If your intention be good, and you really mean to correct the faults of your brother, begin by correcting your own; you

may then proceed to the reformation of his, not with ill-nature and caprice, but with prudence and modesty.

"If you love me sincerely, and with a brother's affection, be as indulgent to me as you are to yourself, and pray for me.

"He that would correct his brother, and thinks that he may dispense with praying for him, and having compassion for his infirmities, is not a sensible physician, but a cruel enemy, and a burthensome railer.

"He that prays for others, as well as for himself, does two good actions.

"The more true the sentiments of brotherly charity you carry in your heart, and the more willingly you pray for your brother, asking God to grant him grace to amend, and to cease to be a scandal to the weak, the deeper will your sorrow be, if he refuses to listen to you, or if he take your warnings ill.

"For each one is to his brother, either a rose which gives out a sweet perfume, or a thorn which pricks."

There are even a series of poems, *Cantica Spiritualia,* which are attributed to à Kempis. Several of these are written in honor of St. Agnes and St. Cecilia who were manifestly favorites of the good monk. They do not compare with the great hymns of two centuries before for the time for writing those had come and gone. One of the hymns to St. Agnes is worth quoting because it comes very near deserving a place in the hymnody of all time:

HYMNUS AD S. AGNETEM

Ave, florens rosa,
Agnes generosa,
Virgo speciosa,
Martyr pretiosa.
  Sumens mel suave
  Ore Iesu, ave,
  Casta sponsa Christi,
  Mundum contempsisti.
Solve pravitates,
Fuga vanitates,

Preme adversantes,
Iuva dimicantes.
  Monstra te benignam,
  Omni laude dignam,
  Iesum ut amemus
  Semper et laudemus.
Virgo singularis
Recte praedicaris,
Agnum imitaris,
Agna nominaris.
  Vitam praesta puram,
  Viam plana duram,
  Ut intremus caelum,
  Carnis aufer velum.
Audi nos, Maria,
Consolatrix pia,
Veni cum Agnete,
Visita nos laete.
  Salva nos, salvator
  Mundi et creator,
  Iesu, vitae dator,
  Virginum amator.
Sit laus Deo Patri,
Christo eius Nato,
Almo Paraclito,
Uni vero Deo. Amen.

To à Kempis also is attributed certain little rhymes collected under the title *Vita boni monachi,* "The Life of a Good Monk." They were evidently meant to be used as reminders of duty, to be kept on one's desk or perhaps to be used as bookmarks, for the making of such bookmarks was rather common in those days. The first of them, *De renuntiatione saeculi,* "The Renunciation of the World," will give an excellent idea of the character of these verselets:

Monache ad quid venisti;
Quare mundum reliquisti?
Cur cappam istam induisti;
Et pompam mundi despexisti?
Nonne ut Deo servires,
Et cor tuum custodires?
Cur ergo sic vagaris,
Et vana meditaris?
Multum peccas evagando:
Tempus perdis otiando.*

According to the traditions that have come to us, Thomas à Kempis was for a number of years, in his middle age, the master of novices in the monastery of St. Agnes. His work, "The Imitation of Christ," is said to have been a series of conferences which, according to rule, he delivered to the novices at regular intervals. Some of his other books represent the fruit of the same custom. It is easy to understand how these verses on renunciation of the world fit in with that conception of à Kempis as an author.

*The translation of the Latin is:

Monk why are you here?
Why have you left the world?
Why put on that monkish garb
And put off the world and its pomp?
Was it not to serve God
And keep your heart in custody?
Why then does your mind wander
And meditate on vain things?
You sin much by dissipation of mind
And waste your time in doing nothing.

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